COLONIAL REPRESENTATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Pro-Consuls of Empire and Some Australian Agents-General

[By CLEM LACK, B.A., Dip.Jour., F.R.Hist.S.Q.]

PART I.

Representation of the Colonies dates back to a relatively early period in British history. It may be said to have developed in logical sequence to the establishment of the Colonial Office which "growed like Topsy" out of a Committee of the Privy Council appointed by the British Monarch, or in the strict constitutional formula, by the King-in-Council in 1660 to administer "The Plantations in America." This was the earliest separate organisation for the administration of Colonial affairs, and it was the parent of the Board of Trade and Plantations which was created in 1695.[1]

In 1768, a third Secretary of State was appointed. A new place was created for the Earl of Hillsborough—the Secretaryship of the Colonies, but this Secretaryship was subsequently abolished, and until 1801 the business of the Colonies was included in the functions of the Home Secretary. In that year the Colonies Department was transferred to the newly created Secretaryship for War.

Representatives of the Colonies resident in Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries were known as Colonial Agents, and were appointed by the Colonies themselves. These Agents, in later years, became known as Crown Agents, which still function today as purchasing agents for Britain's overseas possessions as well as for a number of independent governments, e.g., Nigeria and Uganda. Most of the British Colonies in North America before the American Revolution had special salaried agents in England to superintend their affairs, e.g., Benjamin Franklin was Colonial Agent for Pennsylvania. Broadly, each of the American Colonies had a constitution roughly modelled on that of the Mother Country. In some

1. Executive work was done by the Secretary of State for the Southern Department. The two Secretaries of State in the Ministries of Hanoverian England were the authorised instruments of the Royal Will. Their combined duties, apportioned according to a geographical division, covered both foreign and home affairs. The Secretary for the Northern Department dealt with the Northern Powers of Europe; that for the Southern Department with other foreign States, with Ireland, the Colonies, and the home sphere.

Colonies the Governor was appointed by the Crown; in others by the proprietary. All alike enjoyed a large measure of personal and political freedom. They had the form and substance of the British Constitution; they had representative assemblies in which they taxed themselves for their domestic needs; chose most of their own magistrates and paid them all, and it was seldom that their legislation was interfered with, except with respect to commerce. But, as a whole, the Colonies were *impatient* of control and *jealous* of interference. They had, in fact, *representative,* though not *responsible* government.[2]

The Board of Trade and Plantations had been intended to act as a central organ in Colonial affairs, but it was not an executive authority. It collected and digested information: executive action remained with the Secretary of State, or alternatively, with the Privy Council. The steady volume of Colonial papers that came to London was read, docketed, and answered. They form an encyclopaedic serial on the affairs and growth of the Thirteen Colonies, but British Cabinet Ministers and members of the House of Commons were ignorant of their contents and they resulted in a meagre driblet of effective executive action. The aphorism that George Grenville lost Great Britain her American Colonies *because he really read and acted upon official despatches* is better substantiated by modern documentary research than most historical epigrams.

Canada also had its Colonial Agent in London. Roebuck (1802-1879), a special agent appointed by the House of Assembly of Lower Canada, addressed both Houses of the British Parliament in opposition to the Bill for suspending Lower Canada's Constitution. After Papineau's (Canadian) Rebellion of 1837-38,[3] responsible self-government was given

2. The duty on tea imposed on the American Colonies by the British Government, and other Colonial taxation, including the celebrated *Stamp Act,* had been imposed to help pay for the cost of defending the American Colonies in the war with France. "To represent this ill-fated scheme as a cold-blooded attempt to exploit the Colonies for the benefit of the Home taxpayer, and to filch from the Colonial subjects of the Crown rights long enjoyed, and to reduce them to a slavish and impoverished subjection, is a legend exploded by none more effectively than by American scholars."—C. Grant Robertson, *England Under the Hanoverians,* at p. 234.

3. The rebellions, which broke out late in 1837, were headed in Upper Canada (now Ontario) by William Lyon Mackenzie (grandfather of W. L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada 1921-30 and 1935-48) and in Lower Canada (now Quebec) by Louis Joseph Papineau, later Speaker of the House of Assembly, and Dr. Wolfred Nelson. Many of the rebels in Upper Canada were United States citizens, while the majority of those in Lower Canada were French-Canadians. All the risings were easily crushed. Many of the rebels, including the leaders, fled to the United States. Of those taken prisoner, 29 were executed, eight deported to Bermuda, and 149 sent to Australia as convicts, either to New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land. As a result of the efforts of Bishop Polding, Roman Catholic Bishop of Sydney and others, free pardons were issued by the British Government for 29 of them in February 1844. All the French-Canadians eventually returned to Canada, except three who settled in Australia. An interesting paper on these Exiles from Canada by Dr. George Mackaness is published in the Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol. 50, Part 6.

to the Colonies of British North America, the last to receive it being British Columbia in 1863. The distinct office of Secretary of State for the Colonies had been established in 1854.

BRITAIN'S ATTITUDE TO COLONIES

When the First Settlement was established in Australia, Britain, as a result of the loss of the American Colonies, had entered upon a long period of cynicism and disillusionment. For many years the official attitude at Downing Street, which hardened into an ingrained policy towards Colonial possessions, was that Colonies were millstones around the neck of the Mother Country—or as Turgot, the French economist, expressed it, colonies were like plums, which dropped from the parent tree when they were ripe. Britain's struggle with France, which began in 1689 and ended in 1815, had resulted in a considerable extension of the Empire, notwithstanding the loss of the Thirteen Colonies which marked historically the epochal end of the First British Empire and the beginning of the Second. In the last Napoleonic phase of the struggle, it was *neither primarily nor deliberately* a struggle for Imperial and Colonial expansion and consolidation; *it was primarily a struggle for existence.*

Herein lies the explanation why British statesmen so readily returned the Colonial conquests that had been made since 1802—even the economically rich and strategically important Dutch East Indies—the Indonesia of today. What Colonial retentions were made were justified on military or naval grounds: for *security,* not as the nuclei of a desired, foreseen, and planned Colonial development. Two generations later, Imperialistic opinion criticised British statesmen for having "thrown away conquests invaluable to Great Britain's Colonial future." But the British statesmen of 1815 were preoccupied with what they conceived to be the true moral of 1783. Naval bases—the Cape, Malta, Mauritius—were vital to the protection of a world-wide commerce and the policing of the seas and the trade routes; an island like Ceylon was necessary for the protection of the British possessions in India. Others, such as Trinidad or Tobago, could not be permitted to pass into hands that would use them as nurseries for privateers in a future war; Heligoland was a guardship to Hanover.

But naval bases were one thing; Colonies, like the Parliaments of Charles I became "cursed with age." "They were costly in infancy, troublesome in youth, and they rebelled in manhood." The need of a Britain beyond the seas to which superfluous population could emigrate was not felt, for the

home country could, under her industrial expansion, absorb the multiplying proletariat with profit and comfort. New markets would be provided in Europe, in South America, in the United States, in inhabited and developed States, "not in puny settlements wrestling for existence with Nature and natives, absorbing capital and paying no dividend on the investment." A generation, staggering under a gigantic debt, crippled by taxation and military armaments, exhausted by twenty years of war, justifiably regarded disarmament and reduction as the crying need of the day. "Colonies were an expensive luxury. Nations on the verge of bankruptcy must reduce their expenditure or perish."

AUSTRALIA NO GIFT OF PROVIDENCE

That was the lesson of the critical financial situation in which Britain found herself in 1815, and as always is the case with a long war and a supreme national effort, the full effects of the strain since 1802 asserted themselves for more than a decade. Hence, Australia was not regarded as the gift of Providence and British explorers to compensate for the loss of the American Colonies. Pitt's Government in 1788 viewed it as a convenient outlet, now that the Thirteen Colonies were lost, for transportation copiously fed by the comprehensive criminal code of the day. The British Government was not interested in developing New South Wales as a colony, and a statesmanlike proposal by James Matra, who had sailed with Cook on the *Endeavour* in 1770, that many thousands of American Loyalists who had fought for the Crown in the War of Independence should be settled as free colonists in Australia came to nothing after years of ruin, frustration, and heartbreak for these exiled Americans and their families. Eventually, these "United Empire Loyalists," who had sacrificed their all for the British cause, migrated to Canada. To Nova Scotia, and to what are now New Brunswick and Ontario, they fled in large numbers, estimated as high as 100,000. Others settled as planters in Jamaica. These colonists showed bitter hostility to the United States which refused in any way to compensate them for their confiscated properties. The Loyalists received from Great Britain liberal grants of land and cash compensation amounting to approximately £4 million. Today their descendants comprise three-fourths of the populations of Ontario and New Brunswick which the original Loyalists founded.[4]

Only Governor Phillip had the vision to see that, in his own words, *"It (Australia) would prove the most valuable*

4. See Van Tyne, *The Loyalists In The American Revolution.*

acquisition Great Britain ever made!" The subsequent development of New South Wales, in fact, owed a great deal more to independent colonists than to the men in office in Britain. The energy and faith of the individual Briton were as conspicuous and fruitful as the collective scepticism and apathy which reigned in Downing Street.

This attitude persisted until well into the 19th century. Even Disraeli, who became a great empire builder and saw Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India, in his earlier years had railed at the Colonies as "burdens round the neck of Britannia."

INDIFFERENCE—FATALISM

This policy, a combination of indifference and fatalism, was one of the causes of the difficulties experienced by the early Governors in Australia. In theory, the Colonies were under strict control from London, but in actual practice this was neither possible nor practicable, particularly in the case of the Australian Colonies. For this reason, the early Australian Governors were, in effect, despotic rulers, although they were ultimately accountable for their administrative actions to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. During the first half-century of Australian settlement responsibility for the Colonies was bandied about from one department to another. In 1788, Colonial affairs were under the supervision of a subordinate branch of the Home Department, administered by the Secretary of State, Thomas Townshend, later Viscount Sydney. In 1801, administration of the Colonial Department was transferred to the Secretary for War, Robert Hobart (subsequently Lord Hobart), but the administration of convict affairs remained a responsibility of the Home Department.

Until 1825, when the Colonial Department was reorganised, official communications from the authorities in Australia were dealt with by secretaries of various departments. Phillip and Hunter corresponded principally with the Secretary of the Admiralty, an office held by Phillip after whom Cook named Port Stephens, N.S.W., until 1795, and by Evan Nepean from that year until 1804. King and Bligh transacted a good deal of business with William Marsden, Secretary of the Admiralty from 1804 to 1807 under Lord Castlereagh.

Macquarie's principal correspondents were John Wilson Croker, Secretary of the Admiralty, 1809-1830, and the successive Under-Secretaries for War, Robert (later Sir Robert) Peel, Henry Goulburn, and H. E. Bunbury. Most of these men are commemorated in Australian place-names. Secretaries of State for War and the Colonies during this period, whose names are commemorated on the Australian

map, included the Earl of Liverpool (1809-1812), Earl Bathurst (1812-1827), and Sir George Murray (1828-1830).

The first permanent Under Secretary for the Colonies was Robert William Hay, who was appointed in 1825. In December of the same year a measure of self-government was granted to Australia by the creation of the first Legislative Council in New South Wales. The powers of this body and of the Executive Council were widened by the cessation of transportation in 1840.

NO REAL LINK WITH COLONIES

In 1835, Charles Grant, Colonial Secretary as Lord Glenelg from 1835, governed the Colonies with the assistance of a few clerks in Downing Street, of whom James Stephen was chief. No attempt had been made to establish any real link between them and the Mother Country, and little disputes were brewing with nearly every one of them. Rebellion was rearing its head in Canada; in South Africa, the first Dutch "trek," or secession, into the interior beyond the Orange River began in 1836; and in Australia and Tasmania the grievance was transportation of criminals against which a Parliamentary Committee had reported in 1837. Nobody between Adam Smith and Disraeli had suggested the representation of Colonies in the British Parliament, and Huskisson had overlooked, as Peel was to overlook, the opportunity of binding the Empire together by a regular set of tariffs in favour of the Colonies, although until 1860 Canadian timber was admitted into England at a preferential tariff.

In 1854, during the Crimean War, the Colonial and War Departments were separated, and the Colonial Office came into existence, Sir George Grey being Secretary of State. Henceforth, the official attitude towards the Colonial Empire was materially changed. It became implicit in British policy that the Colonies would eventually achieve fully responsible government of their own. The first Colony to achieve this was the Dominion of Canada, which was established under *The British North America Act of 1867.*

HIGH NOON OF COLONIALISM

In the Victorian era of British Imperial development, Colonial policy was casual and vague. Downing Street discouraged the further acquisition of Colonial commitments. A harassed member of the Colonial Office staff wrote in 1856: "Merchants press upon us new settlements. It is unpopular to resist, and we can always be inundated with evidence of the value of any spot on the Globe, or of its importance to

national greatness—but after a time we are liable to find ourselves burthened with barren islands like the Falklands or unhealthy jungles like Labuan!" Trade was popularly said to "follow the Flag"; in fact, it was more often the Flag which followed trade.[5]

In 1871, it was the high noon of mid-Victorian Colonialism: British governors, sundered by leagues of ocean from Downing Street, ruled like Roman pro-consuls the outposts of a world Empire. The staff of the Colonial Office numbered 67 persons; of these fifteen were copyists and twelve were messengers. All of them were "gentlemen of family and position," recruited—until 1877—by patronage and not by open competitive examination. "Though small in scale by modern standards, the amount of work was considerable: in 1870, a total of some 26,000 despatches, letters, and telegrams were received or sent out from Downing Street, and at this period three-quarters of them were still seen personally by the Secretary of State, whose room on the first floor overlooked St. James's Park.[6] The Permanent Under Secretary in 1871 was Mr. Robert Herbert, later Sir Robert, who had been the first Premier of the Colony of Queensland.[7] "The atmosphere of the office was calm and leisurely"—although some of the more hard-pressed senior officials of the permanent staff would have "home work" to do—a practice which is not unknown in Government departments today.

The Governors most popular in the Colonial Office were those who had a gift for "keeping things quiet" in the Colonies they governed. The British Government considered the Empire was quite big enough. Firmly dedicated to the *status quo,* the men who framed Britain's policy, and the hierarchy of officials who implemented it, were lukewarm, if not actually indifferent to the aspiration of the Imperialists—"wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set."

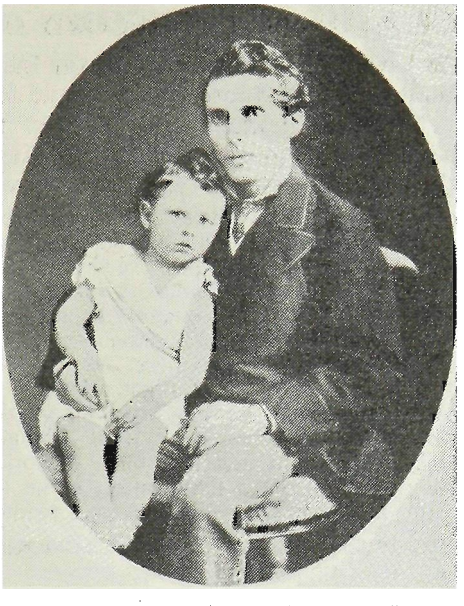
SIR JOHN POPE HENNESSY

One of Britain's most unorthodox Governors, who was singularly notable for his inability to "keep things quiet," was Sir John Pope Hennessy. His terms of vice-regal administration of the Crown Colonies of Labuan, West Africa, the West Indies, Hong Kong, and Mauritius gave the Colonial

5. *Verandah—Some Episodes in the Crown Colonies* 1867-1889; James Pope-Hennessy, London, 1964.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Sir Robert George Wyndham Herbert had returned to England in 1866. In 1870 he was made Assistant Under Secretary for the Colonies, and in 1871 he became Permanent Under Secretary, and occupied that important post with considerable distinction for 21 years. Herbert was the only son of the Hon. Algernon Herbert, a younger son of the first Earl of Carnarvon. He was first cousin to Lord Carnarvon.



JOHN POPE HENNESSY AND SON

Office recurring nightmares. The colourful career of this extraordinary man was told by his grandson, James Pope-Hennessy, in a delightful biography, *"Verandah,"* published in London last year. Written with brilliant insight and flashing ironic humour, he gives a vivid evocative picture of the official and social life in a British Crown Colony of the Victorian era.

I refer to Sir John Pope Hennessy because the surprising statement is made by his grandson that in 1882 Pope Hennessy was appointed Governor of Queensland, but the appointment was cancelled because Queensland objected to a Roman Catholic governor, and he was posted to Mauritius instead of Queensland.

Here is a profound mystery. No reference can be found in the Queensland State archives, or in any other Government official papers and documents, or in the minutes of the Executive Council of Queensland that such an appointment was ever made. When I read the statement in a review of the book published on the Red Page of the Sydney *Bulletin* of 4 April 1964, I consulted with Mr. Austin, and because of its special historical interest, he agreed that we should acquire the biography for the Society's library, and this has been done. My comments were published in the Sydney *Bulletin.*

CONTACT WITH PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Subsequently I wrote to the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, London, asking whether they could furnish verification of the statements made by the author. I received a reply, dated 1 June 1964, from Mr. E. K. Timings, an officer of the Public Record Office, who wrote as follows:

> "In reply to your letter of May 15 about the reference to Queensland in *"Verandah,"* I could find no mention of Governor Pope Hennessy in the Colonial Office Records, Queensland, here, so approached Mr. James Pope-Hennessy, who has kindly supplied the enclosed extracts. The letters on pink paper are extracts from his grandfather's private papers; the other extracts are from the Colonial Office Records, Mauritius, here. Mr. Pope-Hennessy also believes that he found 'a further distinct reference' in one of the Mauritian newspapers when he was working on the archives in Port Louis, but cannot now find his note. He adds that there should certainly be relevant information in the private papers of Lord Kimberley which are now the property of his descendant, the present peer, but he was unable to gain access to them."

The obvious inference is that the present Lord Kimberley was unco-operative.

In addition to copies of a letter relating to the purported Queensland appointment from Governor Pope Hennessy to Lord Kimberley, dated 24 November 1882, and Lord Kimberley's reply, dated the same day, the Public Record Office also sent me copies of six extracts from a file titled "P.H.'s Family Remittances: The Queensland Appointment." I have presented all these communications to our Librarian (Miss O'Keefe) for inclusion in the Society's records.

HENNESSY'S PROTEST TO KIMBERLEY

The letters and extracts are as follows:

Copy of Private Letter, P.H. 26 Norfolk Street, 24 November 1882, to Ld. Kimberley:

> "My Dear Lord,
>
> "I have marked this note 'Private,' as it relates to a point that I understand you did not wish to have mentioned to anyone, and, of course, not touched in such a semi-official note as my other of this date.
>
> "That one of the good Australian Governments should be excluded from the range of my legitimate promotion on the ground that a Roman Catholic on account of his religion could not be appointed there, compels me to consider whether I ought to remain in the Colonial Service, or change to a career where no religious disability exists; and, with that view, I venture to ask for your permission to speak confidentially to two members of the Cabinet.
>
> "I am, my dear Lord,
> Always Yours faithfully,
> J. POPE HENNESSY."

Lord Kimberley's reply was a masterpiece of tact, couched

in that inspired nicety of phrase which has been the hallmark of British diplomacy through the centuries. The letter read as follows:

"Lord Kimberley, Private, C.O., 24 November 1882 to P.H.—

"Dear Sir J. P. Hennessy,

"I am very glad you have called my attention to the point referred to in your private note. I alluded, no doubt, to a feeling said to prevail in a particular Colony, but I hold distinctly that either in the case of that, or any other Colony, the Secretary of State is in no way precluded from recommending The Queen to appoint as Governor any gentleman he may select, whatever may be his religious opinions. I should be sorry indeed to think that any 'religious disability' existed in the Colonial Service.

"Yours sincerely,

KIMBERLEY."

Obviously, there was another letter, or letters. It is equally obvious that the matter was considered of such a secret and confidential nature that the name of the Colony was not mentioned. However, the fact remains that there were files in the Public Record Office relating to the appointment, although these were of an indirect nature, for the photostat entries forwarded to me show that these were listed as *P.H.'s Family Remittances — The Queensland Appointment.* On these extracts, notations and comments were made by officials of the Colonial Office.

The entries are as follow:

C/O 167-646,4790: "Mr. Pearson has noticed that P.H. has again started to remit to England half of his salary, and at the advantageous rate of exchange he alone was allowed. If he can adequately discharge the duties of a Governor on half salary, then the salary was too high.

"Mr. Hemming, 6 March 1889, noted: '. . . It looks very much as if he were laying by money in England at the expense of the Colony.'

"On this, Sir R. Herbert had noted, under date 7 March 1889: 'This is an abuse of a rule. ' "

A confidential outward message dated 14 March 1889 reminds P.H. that such remittances are only allowed for payment of life insurance premiums and support of bona fide dependent relations.

C.O. 167/647-11117: P.H., 11 May 1889, says he did not know of the instructions laid down by Mr. Round when in Mauritius early in 1887, that remittances were no longer to be made at this favourable rate, and even if he had, would not have thought the ruling applied to himself, as he had arranged at the end of 1882 to remit the half salary at par.

Sir R. Herbert noted on 29 June 1889: "All Mauritius civil servants had the privilege in 1883, but it's been withdrawn from the others for some time. As P.H. was leaving so soon it was really better not to bother about it."

Enclosed in the file was a private letter from P.H. to Herbert, dated 10 September 1889:

"Your financial officers have raised a question about the

sending to England of half my salary at par, respecting which I am disposed to invoke you as a witness.

"When the idea of sending me to Mauritius instead of Queensland was mooted, you may recollect that I was told I would not lose by the change, as this half salary at par system would bring up the Mauritius salary to that of Queensland; and just before leaving London I again saw you on the subject. . . "

On this letter is penned a note by someone in the Colonial Office, obviously referring to Hennessy's opinion:

"Doesn't think Round's ruling should apply to Governors anyway."

Apropos of Hennessy's letter, Sir R. Herbert noted on 8 October 1889:

"I do not at all remember the interviews with Sir J. Pope Hennessy which he quotes, and the point is one on which I should have been likely to refer him to the Department."

Telegram, confidential despatch, and ordy (ordinary) despatch sent 9 October '89, giving him (Hennessy) right to continue as in past.

Another file entry, C.O. 167/648-19825, P.H., 6 September 1889, stated:

"He (Hennessy) saw Herbert about remittances in April 1883 and enquired terms (Hennessy said) 'I may also mention—though I am reluctant to touch on such matters—that when I was asked by Lord Kimberley to accept the Government of Mauritius in lieu of an Australian Government, *which I had been offered and had accepted*, I was told that the emoluments of the former, with half pay privilege, would not be less than those of the latter.' "

It would appear that Hennessy received, rightly or wrongly, the impression that his salary at Mauritius was to be made up by way of compensation to the level of what he would have received as Governor of Queensland. Queensland was in the category of a "first-class colony" on the same footing as the other Australian Colonies and New Zealand, whereas Mauritius was a Crown Colony. Herbert's note on the matter suggests that he had no knowledge of any such arrangement.

That the mercurial Sir John could be mollified and induced to accept Mauritius "in lieu of an Australian Government" might be regarded as a master stroke of diplomacy by the Secretary of State. It could reasonably be expected that Sir John would be *persona grata* with the population of Mauritius, the majority of whom were French, and were by religion Roman Catholics. As will be seen, the hope was vain. Turmoil and trouble followed him there just as had happened at every other Colony to which he was appointed.

There does not seem to be any doubt, on the slender evidence available, that through an unofficial channel, an offer was made to Sir John Pope Hennessy of the Governorship of Queensland, and was accepted with alacrity. There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that the offer came from the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Kimberley.

The only assumption that can be made is that the offer did not at any time reach the stage of going through the regular official channel of Colonial Office correspondence. There is, as proof of this, the complete absence of papers in the records of the respective Governments, both in London and Brisbane, covering both the appointment and an official protest or remonstrance from Queensland by the McIlwraith Government. Charles Arrowsmith Bernays makes no mention of Hennessy in his *History of Queensland Politics During Sixty Years,* which was published in 1919. One would have thought that had there been any official record of the matter in State documents, or any strong reaction in Queensland against the appointment, he would have made some reference to it. In his post of Clerk of the Parliament, he was in a uniquely favourable position to obtain access to Government and Parliamentary records.

PARALLEL TO THE BLAKE CASE

The same historian, however, devotes considerable space to a discussion of the celebrated Blake Case, which presents somewhat of a parallel—in reverse—to Hennessy's purported appointment. If Blake's appointment was repugnant to the Roman Catholic population of Queensland, Hennessy's appointment would have been no less repugnant to the Protestants of Queensland, and in the seventies and eighties sectarianism was a potent force in this Colony. If there was any hostile official and public reaction to the appointment of Hennessy it has been the best kept political secret in Queensland's history.[8]

The scarcity of official information on the appointment of Hennessy is the more surprising because of the voluminous papers and the great amount of material that has been written relating to the appointment of Sir Henry Blake as Governor of Queensland in 1888, and the extensive publicity given in the Australasian Colonies and in England to what has become famous in constitutional and political history as The Blake Case.

Blake's appointment was officially announced on 8 November 1888. The McIlwraith Government cabled the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Lord Knutsford) that the appointment of Blake would be objectionable to the people of Queensland. He was particularly repugnant to the Irish

8. In 1882, when Sir John Pope Hennessy was said to have been offered the Governorship of Queensland by Lord Kimberley, Sir Arthur Kennedy, who had preceded Pope Hennessy as Governor of Hong Kong, was the incumbent of the office. He had been appointed in April 1877, resigned in 1883, and died at Aden on his way home to England (June 1883).

Catholic community because of his association with the coercion policy in Ireland. But strong opposition to Blake came not only from Queensland's Irish citizens. Griffith, Leader of the Opposition, and a leading Protestant, strongly supported McIlwraith, and the famous cable of protest was sent in the name of "the Government and Opposition of Queensland." Queensland, a first-class Colony, felt that it had been slighted by a gross example by the Colonial Office, of political patronage. The *Brisbane Observer,* the evening edition of the *Brisbane Courier,* in November 1888, commissioned its Office Bard to comment acridly in verse—

We always did think no small beer
Of Queensland in a small way,
But now we're proud they're sending here
One of the Blakes of Galway.

No common man from Severn's side,
Or from the Firth of Solway;
Ah no! a source of keener pride,
A genuine Blake from Galway.

A humble bobby! O ye gods!
They try to snub us alway;
An ex-J.P.—but what's the odds?
Ain't he a Blake from Galway?

And so to others' jibes and sneers
We'll this unto you say:
Bother your blooming Lords and Peers
We've got a Blake from Galway!

"Punch and Figaro," a weekly journal ardently pro-McIlwraith, described Blake as "a Galway man, a Protestant, and a slavish Imperialist, his promotions in the service being in the nature of rewards for his fervid and unquestioning Tory toadyism." The journal referred to Sir Henry's career including his appointment as a special resident magistrate selected by the British Government in January 1882 to carry out a policy of "pacification" in Ireland.

A front page cartoon with the title "Not Wanted" showed a Junoesque Miss Queensland having afternoon tea with a portly McIlwraith. Enter Lord Knutsford in the role of a footman carrying a card:

JEAMES (Lord Knutsford) announces His Excellency, Sir Henry Arthur Blake,[9] the new Governor, and Lieut. G. Fitzgerald, private secretary.

MISS QUEENSLAND: Not at home, Jeames!

CAUSED COMMOTION WHEREVER HE WENT

It was rightly said of Pope Hennessy that no Colony was ever quite the same after he left it. An editorial in the *Pall Mall Gazette* said in July 1887: "You might as well pour acid into a solution of soda and marvel at the effervescence as be amazed at the commotion that follows Sir John's advent in a Crown colony." Charles Bruce, Colonial Secretary of Mauritius, who arrived in Mauritius four weeks before Pope Hennessy, and was in later years himself governor of Mauritius, said in his book *The Broadstone of Empire* that Pope Hennessy had appeared as "an angry boil on more than one part of the body of the Empire." Had he become Governor of Queensland, it is not difficult to imagine the commotion he would have caused here. A clash between Hennessy and McIlwraith would have lent an epic quality to our political history of the eighties.

The amazing feature of Pope Hennessy's career is that he was able to survive for so long as the holder of successive Victorian Crown Colony governorships. Although he plagued successive Colonial Secretaries, no attempt, it seems, was ever made to "sack" him. Apparently when he became too embarrassing, he was simply moved to another Colony! In other words, he was kicked upstairs. His official career was studded with scandals, rebellions, and intrigues, while he continued to find the time and the inexhaustible energy to conduct his own private war with the Colonial Office. He was, in the words of the *Pall Mall Gazette,* in an inspired metaphor, "as tough as gutta-percha and as wily and wary as a weasel."

John Pope Hennessy was probably the most unorthodox governor in the history of British colonial administration. Could one find any more perversely contradictory figure than one who was at the same time an Irishman, a Catholic, and an ardent Tory with extreme liberal views well in advance of his time? As a Tory Irish Nationalist he sat in the House of Commons for six years. Disraeli was greatly impressed with the brilliant volatile young Irishman, and when the Tories

9. An account of Blake's career and the furore his appointment caused in Queensland is given in C. A. Bernays' *Queensland—Our Seventh Political Decade,* pp. 358-361.
The constitutional issues are ably discussed by A. C. V. Melbourne, *Brisbane Daily Mail,* 26 March and 9 April, 1927.

came back to power in 1866, it was decided that this "promising young man" was deserving of at least a Colonial governorship. For some unaccountable reason he was appointed governor of Labuan. Pope Hennessy was not particularly flattered. His ego was such that he considered the governorship of one of the Australian colonies would have been more worthy of his talents, but it was not until some years afterwards, when the record of his idiosyncracies and escapades was already lending a luminous glow to the prosaic, pedestrian files of the Colonial Office that the purported offer of the Queensland governorship came his way. Labuan became the starting point for a career of constant turmoil and colourful incident as he moved from one Crown Colony to another. The most picturesque episode of his stormy sojourn in the squalid, fever-ridden colony of Labuan was his importation of a band of teetotal Dublin policemen to clean the place up and enforce health regulations.

NOTIONS OF DEMOCRATIC EQUALITY

His notions of democratic equality were novel to the point of eccentricity in this *fin-de-siêcle* period of the colonial Empire, and aroused bitter hostility among the white population. In nearly every place to which he was sent he succeeded in stirring up strife between the colonists and the natives. He antagonised and humiliated local British officials, and succeeded in alienating the friendship and support of influential leaders and powerful local groups in each Colony. One of his greatest exploits was his frontal attack on the planter oligarchy of the Barbados, which sparked off a negro rebellion in the West Indies.

This was early in 1876. The British Parliament and the country were alarmed by news of disturbances on the island of Barbados and strong complaints from the white population against their Governor.[10] Pope Hennessy had, from the time of his appointment, warmly supported the idea of confederation, although it found no favour with the local legislature. Instead of waiting until the suggestions of the Imperial Government had produced spontaneous action on the part of the Colony, Pope Hennessy pressed the question on the Assembly—an action which was afterwards censured by Lord Carnarvon as "indiscreet," and his words were described by the same speaker as "dangerously suggestive of undue construction by an excitable negro population."[11] Riot and disturbance broke out among the negroes and panic among some of the planters gave rise to acts of violence and repres-

10. British Annual Register 1876, p. 167.
11. *Ibid.*

sion. The tidings which reached England were discussed in both Houses of Parliament, and Lord Carnarvon declared that "while he could not endorse all the Governor's acts, neither could he accept the wild charges made against Mr. Hennessy by his opponents. In the crisis, the former had displayed singular tact and presence of mind; and therefore he had no intention of recalling him, *although he would probably be transferred to some other post of equal responsibility and distinction.*"

ON TO HONG KONG

Hennessy's "transfer to some other post of equal responsibility and distinction" was something that happened with monotonous regularity throughout his career. The summit of his career was reached when he became Governor of the important Colony of Hong Kong. Hennessy's immediate predecessor at Hong Kong was Sir Arthur Kennedy, who was Governor of Hong Kong from 1872 to 1877, and subsequently Governor of Queensland from April 1877 to May 1883. There was much plucking of beards in the Colonial Office at the astronomical heights reached by Vice-Regal expenditure. During Hennessy's term at Hong Kong he spent £70,000 a year on salutes fired in Victoria Harbour to visiting admirals and to welcome distinguished visitors and potentates. One of the bills presented to the Colonial Office was an amount for £800 for photographs taken on the Governor's orders during the visit to Hong Kong of Prince Albert Victor and Prince George of Wales (afterwards King George V), who were on a world cruise in 1881 in *H.M.S. Bacchante.*

His departure from Hong Kong was hastened by a scandal which reverberated from the parlours of Hong Kong's elite citizenry to the purlieus of Downing Street and the corridors of Westminster. Pope Hennessy attacked with an umbrella a leading citizen of Hong Kong who was also a prominent member of the Executive Council, whom he accused of having seduced his wife. The aggrieved gentleman complained bitterly to the Colonial Office that the Governor had tried to poke out his eyes with the point of the umbrella. The Colonial Secretary noted on Hennessy's by now extremely bulky file that "it was a pitiful business." Lord Kimberley subsequently directed that no more time be wasted over inquests into Sir John's five years of achievement in Hong Kong. "Lord Kimberley has desired that a sponge should be wiped over Sir J. P. Hennessy's record at Hong Kong," an Assistant Secretary of State noted for the benefit of his colleagues, "as it is unprofitable to go into all the reasons and justifications for his various failures in his attempts at making accurate state-

ments and in substantiating wild charges against his principal officers."

TROUBLE AT MAURITIUS

Mauritius was his next and final stop. Here his attempt to establish a democratic constitution almost caused a civil war between the French and English inhabitants of the island. At Mauritius he became involved in a fiery dispute with Mr. Clifford Lloyd, an Irishman like himself, but strongly imbued with the feelings of Dublin Castle, who was appointed Colonial Secretary and Lieutenant-Governor of Mauritius in succession to Charles Bruce. The relationship between Sir John and this "rabid Protestant Orangeman, already notorious for the severe measures he had taken against members of the Land League when special resident magistrate in Ireland," can be imagined. A man with laudable humanitarian instincts, but withal domineering and impulsive, the sympathiser with the oppressed Catholics of Western Ireland, was also impetuously enthusiastic for the equal rights of all men, irrespective of creed or colour, Sir John came into headlong collision with a personality as assertive and intransigeant as his own. The contention between the two officials and their respective partisans became so serious that the Secretary of State was at last forced to instruct Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor of the Cape, and previously Governor of New South Wales (1872-1879) to proceed to Mauritius as a Royal Commissioner to arbitrate between the disputants.

Hennessy was suspended without salary, but the final decision, with some reservations, was given in his favour, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Henry Holland (later Lord Knutsford), acquitting him of most of the accusations made against him. Reinstated, Hennessy returned in triumph to Mauritius where he remained until December 1889.

But seemingly the Colonial Office had had enough. He was finally recalled and no further gubernatorial appointments were offered him. In 1890, he retired on a pension from the Colonial Service, and was formally congratulated by Lord Knutsford on his "successful" administration.

He took up his residence at Rostellan Castle, Sir Walter Raleigh's house, near Youghal, the picturesque mansion bestowed on Raleigh by his "Gloriana." Raleigh, the gallant adventurer and historian, was one of Hennessy's heroes, and he was the author of a book, "Raleigh In Ireland," which was praised by the critics.

In 1891, a year after his election to the House of Commons as anti-Parnellite member for North Kilkenny, the ebullient Sir John died at the age of 57.

THE QUESTION OF CONSULTATION

In the mid-Victorian Colonial era, from the late sixties onward, the question of appointments of Colonial Governors and the personalities and capacities of the appointees was a contentious issue in the relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies. The latter were showing an awkward tendency to demand from the Colonial Office the right of prior consultation before Imperial appointments were made. The attitude of Queensland, which was typical of the other Australian colonies towards Colonial Governorships and their increasing hostility to the dispensing of political patronage by the Colonial Office, which Lord Knutsford had been recorded as asserting was "the prescriptive privilege" of the Colonial Office, is illustrated by an article which appeared in the *Brisbane Courier*.[12]

This article referred to the fact that since Lord Derby's last accession to office, the Colonial Minister had almost invariably gone outside the list of existing Colonial servants of the Crown in his search for a nominee to any vacant Governorship. Lord Derby's Government had begun by appointing Lord Belmore, who had no previous Colonial experience, to the Governorship of New South Wales.[13] The Governorship of New South Wales was then worth £7,000 a year and contingencies, which, the *Courier* commented, "made it one of the most agreeable 'plums' at the disposal of the Secretary of State for the Colonies."

The article continued: "They (the Colonial Office) proceeded to appoint Mr. Pope Hennessy Governor of Labuan and Consul-General of Borneo at a combined salary of £7,300 a year.

"Thirdly, they threw to a political Cerberus, Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald, the rich sop of the Bombay Governorship with a salary of about £12,000 a year.

"Fourthly, they had assigned to Mr. Du Cane the Governorship of Tasmania, with its salary of £4,000 and its allowances of £2,500 a year.[14]

"Fifthly, Sir James Fergusson reaped the reward of his services in Parliament and of his management of the Marquis of Bute by

12. Brisbane Courier, 12 October 1868.

13. Somerset Richard Lowry-Corry, 4th Earl of Belmore (1835-1913), was a junior member of the third Derby Ministry in 1866. In the following year Belmore was appointed Governor of New South Wales, and he arrived in Sydney on 7 January 1868, in time to receive Prince Alfred Duke of Edinburgh, who was on a visit to the Australian Colonies. The attempted assassination of Prince Alfred, and the opening of the first Intercolonial Exhibition in Prince Alfred Park, Sydney, in 1870, were the only notable events in Lord Belmore's undistinguished term as governor. He resigned his position in February 1872 because of ill health. His wife was a niece of W. E. Gladstone, and his cousin, Montague Corry (afterwards Lord Rowton) was private secretary to Lord Beaconsfield.

14. Sir Charles Du Cane (1825-1889), Governor of Tasmania, had been Conservative member for Maldon, Essex, in 1852-53, and represented North Essex in the House of Commons from 1857 to 1868. During the last two years of his term he was a Civil Lord of the Admiralty. He was appointed Governor of Tasmania in December 1868, took office there in January 1869, and served until November 1874.

having South Australia committed to his charge with £5,000 a year as his inducement to try his 'prentice hand upon some hundred thousand English colonists who look to Adelaide as their centre of existence.[15]

"Sixthly, it is well understood that the Earl of Mayo is to be the successor of Clive, Warren Hastings, Cornwallis, William Bentinck, Dalhousie, and Canning in the control and administration of the mightiest dependency which any Imperial nation, whether ancient or modern, has ever owned.

"Seventhly, all the world is aware that Lord Monck's successor in Canada is about to be publicly proclaimed, and rumour has already been busy with the name of Lord John Manners, as of a man who may not be unwilling to try whether a few years at Ottawa are not unendurable in view of the contingent advantages which expatriation will bring in its train."

The *Courier* further suggested that although it was no longer possible for the Colonial Office to treat British colonists with the arrogance that was meted out to Virginia and Massachusetts in the years before the Declaration of American Independence, the ignorance of Home officials of the Colonial viewpoint and the insouciance of the public at large in 1868, was not one whit in advance of 1776. It was only a few days since the Prime Minister of Nova Scotia, after trying to get a hearing in Downing Street, returned mournfully to his own country openly avowing that his fellow countrymen, although the most loyal subjects that British North America contained, would be compelled to seek that justice at Washington which they were unable to obtain at Westminster. Was this, the *Courier* asked, a moment to send utterly untried men out to the Colonies, many of which were seething with internal discords into which it was doubtful whether contemporary Colonial Secretaries of State had any serious insight.

"If," commented the *Courier* lugubriously, "in order that a Mr. Du Cane or a Mr. Pope Hennessy may be provided for, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are lost to the British Crown, our descendants will view Mr. Disraeli . through the same spectacles which we now employ while reading the despatches and deploring the ignorance of George Grenville[16] and Lord Hillsborough[17] in the third quarter of the 19th century.

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15. Sir James Fergusson (1832-1907), who saw service in the Crimean War as an officer of the Grenadier Guards, sat in the House of Commons as member for Ayrshire from 1854 to 1857, and again from 1859 to 1868. He was Under Secretary for India in 1866-67, and Under Secretary for Home Affairs in 1867-69. He relinquished the latter post to become Governor of South Australia, an appointment he held from 1869 to 1873. During his governorship he encouraged the Premier of the Colony to proceed with the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line to Darwin. He was subsequently Governor of New Zealand (1873-74) and Governor of Bombay (1880-85).

16. George Grenville (1712-1770) was the English statesman who piloted through the British House of Commons the *Stamp Act*, which first drove the American Colonies to resistance. See footnote 2, p.. . . If the importance of events in history is measured by the consequences which flow from them, the *Stamp Act* of 1765 and the summoning of the Estate-General in France in 1789 are the two epoch-making events of the Eighteenth Century. The *Stamp Act* and similar measures are admitted today to have been equitable by the best British and American authorities. The share of the American colonists as a contribution to Imperial defence was trifling compared with the burden borne by the people of Great Britain, and not one penny was to be spent elsewhere than in America, or for plain Colonial needs. But it kindled into a blaze all the smouldering embers of Colonial discontent. Although an honest and honourable man, Grenville's overleaping ambition, want of tact, and imperious nature made him a highly unpopular Minister both in England and in the American Colonies. On one occasion George III said he would rather have the devil in his Cabinet than George Grenville.

17. Lord Hillsborough was made Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1768. See page 456.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

The outbreak of the rebellion in Canada was the immediate cause of the origin of Responsible Government in the British Dominions.[18] This convinced the Imperial Government of the day that the system of government then in force in Canada had ceased to serve even the elementary purpose of maintaining public order. "It became clear that some form of administration must be devised which would obviate the recurrence of rebellion in close proximity to the frontier of a power which might, without much injustice, be suspected of being not unwilling to see the disappearance of Monarchial Government from the American Continent: but it was not less certain that the form chosen must be such as to obviate any possibility of the separation of the Colony from the Mother Country, a contingency which, from the period of the War of American Independence, was always painfully present to the minds of those responsible for the conduct of Colonial Affairs. The solution adopted in large measure at the instigation of Lord Durham was to leave to the Colonists, to the greatest extent possible, the control of those affairs which might properly be described as local while reserving control in those matters which could be held to affect the Empire as a whole. "

" . In any account of the influences which favoured the development of freedom from restraint mention should not be omitted of the influence on Secretaries of State of the permanent officials of the Colonial Office; their education and training, especially before the system of open competition was applied to the recruitment of the Office, were not such as to encourage qualities of mind which might offer interference in what could be left alone, and this attitude of *laissez faire,* which was in harmony with the spirit of the period when responsible government grew to maturity, was undoubtedly the cause why so much liberty was attained by the Colonies with, comparatively speaking, so little friction. . "

This, of course, was many years before the Statute of Westminster, an Act of the United Kingdom Parliament which received the Royal Assent on 11 December 1931, and began a new chapter in Commonwealth relations.

NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM

The development of self-government in the British Colonies in the 19th century posed a new constitutional problem. They were something much more than Crown Colonies, but although they could—and did—regard themselves as "colonial

18. Sir Arthur Berriedale Keith, *Responsible Government in The Dominions.*

nations," they could not, at that time, be considered to be sovereign powers, nor could they be placed in the same category, or have the same footing, as the embassies of foreign countries, in spite of the fact that their representatives were, in effect, ambassadors.

Their status required a representative who would be something more than a Colonial Agent in the old accepted meaning of the term, and who would replace the Imperial official who was designated the Agent-General for Crown Colonies. The new position of Colonial Agent-General was designed therefore to meet the peculiar requirements of the Colonies' status. Unquestionably the institution of Agencies-General strengthened the position of the self-governing Colonies in the British political system. Canada, the Australasian Colonies, and the British Colony at the Cape all had established Agencies in London in the thirty years between 1858 and 1888. Each had an Agent-General resident in London.

Sir Arthur Berriedale Keith has suggested that Agents-General had mainly a business origin: "the Crown Colonies, no less than the other Colonies, used to keep resident agents in London, often of course only slightly connected with the Colony, to transact all manner of business for them. Gradually the position of these Agents became more political and less commercial, and men of higher status were appointed to the posts." Keith refers to an amusingly solemn despatch written on 12 February 1879 to the New Zealand Government by Sir J. Vogel, Agent-General for New Zealand, a vigorous advocate of higher status for Agents-General. Vogel complained that the term "Agent-General" was apt to lead to misunderstandings: an Agent-General for Victoria had found that, when he ordered the term to be inscribed on some blinds, the person entrusted with the duty turned it into "General Agent," and the truth was that the Agency was regarded as a "General Agency" of a most enlarged description of a commercial character. Vogel wanted the term to be altered to "Resident Ministers," who should have "a defined precedence and status, and be in all respects like ambassadors, subject to the fact that the Colonies were parts of the Empire."[19]

But it was not until 1905 that New Zealand adopted the title of High Commissioner for her London representative in preference to that of Agent-General. Keith points out, however, that much earlier—in 1879—Canada had nominated Sir Alexander Galt to act as Minister Resident in London,

19. *Responsible Government in The Dominions; New Zealand Parliamentary Papers,* 1879.

and the term "High Commissioner" was finally decided upon as suitable, after consultation with the Imperial Government.

At the same time no attempt was made to rank the High Commissioners among the official hierarchy, or to place them with ambassadors, and the full recognition of their claims to be deemed representatives of the Dominions was hardly accorded until the arrival of Sir George Reid in London in 1910, and the recognition accorded them by the desire of King Edward VII on various formal occasions, and by order of King George V at the Royal Funeral 1910, at the State Opening of Parliament, and at the Coronation of 1911.

On occasions, Agents-General formed themselves into a Council to express the advice of the several Colonies: thus, they made a deputation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to ask him to sanction the Divorce Act of Victoria passed in 1889; they united in recommendations of the adoption of the principle of allowing the Colonies to know the names of proposed Governors before the final selection was made; and they constantly pressed on the Colonial Office the question of the Western Pacific.

But Keith emphasises that their political energy was subject to considerable limitation: "The Governor as the King's Representative was clearly the proper person through whom any important communication should come. Thus, the Secretary of State, in the case of a request from the McIlwraith Government in Queensland in 1888 not to appoint Sir Henry Blake, preferred to deal with the Officer administering the Government and not with the Agent-General (Thomas Archer)."

ENCOURAGEMENT OF EMIGRATION

Generally speaking, the duties and responsibilities of the Agents-General included representation of the commercial, financial, and general interests of the respective Colonies. When these Agencies-General were first established possibly the most important function they performed was to encourage emigration to their respective Colonies. They distributed pamphlets to prospective migrants, interviewed them to ascertain their suitability, and made visits to centres in England, especially to the farming districts, to give lectures on the Colony and its opportunities for the newcomer. The Agents-General were required also to develop markets for Australian produce, to control the purchase of stores and materials for their governments, and to assist in floating loans and obtaining money in the United Kingdom.

The States have continued over the years to maintain Agents-General in London, all of whom work in close

co-operation with the High Commissioner for Australia in keeping their governments informed of developments overseas. Since the Financial Agreement of 1927 between the Commonwealth and the States the Agents-General have been less concerned than formerly with loan flotations and financial matters, but they continue to encourage emigration and to disseminate information in Britain about the States they represent.

THE FIRST AGENTS-GENERAL

The first Agent-General to be appointed by the Government of an Australian Colony was George Seal Walters, who became the representative in London for South Australia in May 1858 and took up his appointment in January 1859.

Other Colonies who appointed Agents-General in order of sequence were:

QUEENSLAND: The first Agent-General, Henry Jordan, assumed duty in London on 9 October 1860. At first he was known as "Emigration Commissioner," the designation being changed to "Agent-General for Emigration to Queensland" in 1864.

NEW SOUTH WALES: Edward Hamilton, who had acted for the New South Wales Government in London in an unofficial capacity, was appointed Agent-General on 1 January 1863.

TASMANIA: Adye (later Sir Adye) Douglas was appointed Agent-General on 9 March 1886.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: The last of the Australian Colonies to establish an Agency-General in London was Western Australia. On 14 April 1892 Sir Malcolm Fraser was appointed the Colony's first Agent-General.

VICTORIA: The first Agent-General was George Frederick Verdon, who took up his appointment in London on 1 December 1868, but Hugh C. E. Childers had acted for several years as Victoria's London representative in an unofficial capacity.

INFLUENCE OF COLONISTS IN BRITAIN

Apart from the official representation in London by Agents-General of the pre-Federation Australian Colonies, considerable unofficial influence was exerted through the Colonial Office on Colonial affairs by leading former Colonists who had either retired to live in England or were there by virtue of business interests and connections. In a paper given to The Royal Australian Historical Society,[20] David S. Macmil-

20. *The Australians In London 1857-1880, Journal R.A.H.S. Vol. 44, Part 3, 1958.*

lan has dealt thoroughly and extensively with the composition and influence exerted by this unofficial but effective body of Colonial opinion which existed in London between 1857 and 1880. Most of the personalities in this influential group came from New South Wales, and its leader was Sir Charles Nicholson, who figures in our own Queensland history as the first President of the Queensland Legislative Council. He was a man of outstanding intellect and many-sided interests, cultural, economic, and political. The contacts Nicholson made with colonists from various parts of the Empire led in 1868 to the foundation of the Royal Colonial Institute, on whose first Council Nicholson himself was to play a decisive part.

THE COLONIAL INSTITUTE

The part played by the Australian group within the Colonial Institute during the seventies in publicising the Colonies was considerable. Occasionally the Institute sent deputations to the Colonial Office to press for action on important issues. One such issue was that of New Guinea. In 1870 Nicholson had spoken to the Royal Geographical Society of the need for the British and Colonial Governments to take the lead in exploring the island before foreign explorers could take back reports of its wealth to their own governments. By 1874, the discovery, or reported discovery, of gold in New Guinea by Captain Moresby made the issue an urgent one. On 29 April 1874 a deputation headed by Nicholson waited upon the Earl of Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and presented a memorial urging the annexation of the island.

There is evidence that this unofficial but powerful influence was resented in at least some instances by Agents-General and by Colonial Governments. John Douglas, Queensland's second Agent-General, in his controversy with the Queensland Government, to be noted in a subsequent paper, said: "There have been occasions when persons purporting to represent opinions on subjects connected with Australian policy *have unduly forced themselves on the attention of Her Majesty's Government without sufficient authority, and sometimes even in direct antagonism to the opinions of the communities to which they profess to belong.*"

"MISCHIEVOUS INTERFERENCE"

Douglas also quoted a statement by Colonel Samuel Wensley Blackall (Governor of Queensland, 1868-1871) in reply to Lord Granville that "considerable dissatisfaction" for some years past had been caused in Queensland Govern-

ment circles by the "mischievous interference of self-constituted Colonial Societies and other pretended representatives of Colonies in England," and he trusted that in future no statement made at Downing Street by persons not formally and officially accredited by the Government of the Colony may be permitted to influence Her Majesty's Advisers.

Giving evidence before a joint Select Committee of Inquiry in 1872 Douglas said he made it a point on all occasions to claim and to receive the same recognition which other officers from other Colonies in a similar position received and maintained. This he considered most necessary because it had been frequently noticed that retired Colonists of influence and wealth in England had obtained the ear of the Colonial Office, and sometimes gave expression to public opinion as quasi-authoritative exponents of Colonial information in a manner which was scarcely justifiable.

The background to the so-called "mischievous interference" of self-constituted Colonial Societies is to be found in the activities of a number of Colonial residents in London—or as a contemporary account described them "gentlemen purporting to represent Colonial feeling"[21]—who feared that changes in Colonial Office policy under Lord Granville's administration tended to loosen "yet further the tie, already so slight, which connected the various portions of the great British dominion." That tie, over a long period of years, had become in certain respects less stringent and Colonial politicians at home were becoming concerned as to the durability of the tie, as the representative institutions of the greater Colonies were replaced by the establishment of responsible government. There seems to be no doubt that the moving spirits of this movement included leading members of the Colonial Institute. Leaders of the movement addressed in August 1869 a circular letter to the Governments of the several Colonies having responsible government, suggesting to them the expediency of their sending delegates to "a conference of Colonial representatives to be held in London, and proposing that it be held in February 1870, about the same time as the meeting of the Imperial Parliament." Lord Granville, addressing the same governments on the subject of the circular, commented on it as follows:[22]

> "Independently of the consideration that the project assumes at its outset an attitude of antagonism to Her Majesty's Government, my opinion is that it is not in itself calculated to answer its purpose. In the first place, the attempt to cover by one arrangement all the principal Colonies enjoying Representative Government

21. British Annual Register for 1870, p. 112.

22. British Annual Register for 1871, pp. 112-114.

appears to me injudicious. The questions which most seriously affect individual Colonies in relation to the Mother Country have often in their nature and treatment little connection with those which arise in others; nor, as far as I am aware, is there anything in the mode of transacting business between the British and Colonial Governments which, under their generally cordial relations, obstructs negotiation, or calls for any practical improvement in their means of communication.

"As a general rule it appears to me that the wishes of the Colonists are likely to be more faithfully and effectually brought before the Home Government by the Local Ministers[23] who are in immediate contact with the communities which they represent, and through the Governor, who is responsible to Her Majesty for furnishing all requisite information than by a body of gentlemen resident in London, acting in pursuance of their own views or of mere written instructions, under influences not always identical with those which are paramount in the Colony, and without the guarantee which their recommendations may derive from having passed through the Governor's hands. It will be obvious to you that these objections to a standing representation of the Colonial Empire in London have no relation to the appointment of several or collective Agencies on the system now in force, which, I believe, completely answers its purpose."

Early in 1871 answers to Lord Granville's despatch were received from all the important Colonies, which, although the language varied, uniformly discouraged the proposal put forward by the movers of the scheme in London, and revealed no readiness to join in a conference of Colonial representatives. Most of the Colonies declared themselves to be satisfied with the administration of their affairs by local governments responsible to their own people under the general link of Imperial authority, and expressed no desire for closer connection.

Queensland, one of the last Colonies to be established, sent a reply through the Governor, Colonel Samuel Wensley Blackall. Portion of the text was as follows:

"The Council observe that considerable dissatisfaction has for some years past been caused by the mischievous interference of those self-constituted Colonial Societies and other pretended representatives of the Colonies in England, and trust that in future no statement made at Downing Street by persons not formally and officially accredited by the Government of the Colony may be permitted to influence Her Majesty's Advisers.

"That this Government sees no reason to alter the present mode of communication on subjects of mutual interest with Her Majesty's Government.

"That no desire has ever been shown by the Colonists of Queensland to withdraw from the British Empire. On the contrary, they have always manifested the most sincere loyalty and attachment to the Mother Country, *but they observe with regret that their countrymen at home display through the Press and in Parliament a desire to thrust the Colonies out of the Empire.*

23. Granville referred to the Colonial Ministers of the Crown.

"That whenever a serious intention shall be shown in the British Parliament to break the Imperial tie, the Colonists will claim their right to be heard against a deprivation of their position and rights as Englishmen without their consent."

"UNOFFICIAL AMBASSADORS"

Some of the Australian Colonies had what could be described as "unofficial ambassadors" in London. Three of the most outstanding were Hugh Childers and Sir Andrew Clarke, for Victoria, and Sir Daniel Cooper for New South Wales. Hugh Childers, who was a Liberal member of Parliament in England, and later a Cabinet Minister, was for several years an unofficial representative in London of the Victorian Government. He was an associate of Sir Charles Nicholson and a member of the Colonial Society formed in London in June 1868. I will make further reference to Childers' career and influence later in this paper. Sir Andrew Clarke (1824-1902) had had a notable career in Victorian politics. In May 1853, when he was still under 30, he became Surveyor-General of Victoria, with a seat in the Legislative Council. He was one of the founders of the Philosophical Society, afterwards the Royal Society of Victoria. When responsible government was established in Victoria Clarke was elected a member of the Legislative Assembly for Emerald Hill, and as Surveyor-General to the first Haines Ministry initiated a Bill for the establishment of municipal authorities, which was passed, and Clarke can be regarded as the founder of municipal government in Victoria. In March 1858 he was asked by the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, to form a government. However, when his request for a dissolution was refused Clarke abandoned the attempt to form an administration. In 1858 he made the decision to return to England. He had the ambition of obtaining the post of Governor of the new Colony of Queensland and thought that in London he would have greater opportunity to advance his claims. He was bitterly disappointed when the post went to Sir George Ferguson Bowen. At Colchester, where he was in command of the Royal Engineers, he was able to render valuable service to Victoria by an adamant refusal to accept obsolete weapons for the volunteer forces in that Colony. In May 1873 he was appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements, and in 1875 he became a member of the Council of the Viceroy of India. In 1891 Clarke acted as Agent-General for Victoria for a few months, and while occupying the same position from November 1892 to April 1894 he worked hard to uphold the financial credit of Australia during the crisis of 1893. He was again acting Agent-General for Victoria in January 1897,

and two years later the qualification of "acting" was dropped and he was appointed Agent-General, a position he held until his death in London on 29 March 1902. He also acted on occasions as Agent-General for Tasmania.

Sir Daniel Cooper was similarly an unofficial "ambassador" for New South Wales. He was Speaker of the House in the three Parliaments of which he was a member, but in January 1860 he resigned because of ill health. Retiring from politics he left for London where he lived until his death. He was Agent-General for New South Wales in 1888 and from 1897 to 1899. When he was not acting officially he was equally effective as an unofficial representative. Cooper's wealth, acquired partly from commerce and partly from investments in land, was largely spent on philanthropy in England and Australia. He was formally placed in charge of the Agency on five occasions and for nearly forty years he relayed valuable backstairs information and advice to his friends in the New South Wales Parliament. Unquestionably, industrious sideline activity of this kind must have been galling and embarrassing to the official Agent-General. One Agent-General was provoked to comment tersely: "Sir Daniel is an idle man and has doubtless more time for writing than I have, and possibly is fond of it."[24]

DUTIES ILL DEFINED

Generally, the definition of the duties and responsibilities of Colonial Agents-General were vague and imprecise. Only three Colonies, Victoria (*The Agent-General's Act of* 1872), Tasmania (*The Agent-General's Act of* 1885), and South Australia (*The Agent-General's Act of* 1889) enacted legislation to define the duties and term of appointment, and the clauses were, in some cases, e.g., Victoria, couched in vague and pompous officialese. Each of these Colonies prepared a list of detailed Instructions to the Agent-General which were submitted to Parliament for approval. These Instructions covered such matters as the procedure to be adopted in conducting financial and commercial business, in dealing with correspondence and accounts, the security required of the Agent-General and his staff, and the measures to be taken should the Agent-General become incapacitated.

There was no hard and fast rule as to the length of term of an Agent-General. The practice, in the early stages, was

24. Barbara R. Penny, Establishing a Nineteenth Century Government Office-Australian Agents-General. *Public Administration, Vol. xii, No. 2, June 1963.* Barbara Penny comments: "Nevertheless, Cooper could be relied upon to come to the Colony's aid in times of crisis, and his intimate acquaintance with the higher levels of London society and his personal fortune made him a valuable representative for New South Wales in either a formal or informal capacity."

to appoint an Agent-General without specifying any term of office. Two South Australian Agents-General (Dutton and Blyth) died in office after holding the post for twelve and fourteen years respectively. In the New South Wales Agency, where no terms were imposed during the 19th century, Cowper died in office, and Samuel was Agent-General for eighteen years. Victoria inserted in *The Agent-General's Act of* 1872 a clause providing that the person "appointed from time to time as Agent-General for Victoria" should hold office for a period not exceeding three years, but he was eligible for reappointment. The Governor-in-Council could at any time suspend or remove him from office. Tasmania (*Agent-General's Act of* 1885) and South Australia (*Agent-General's Act of* 1889) adopted the same conditions of tenure.

The Agency-General in the various Colonies was frequently bestowed as a reward for political services, but it was also in some cases a useful device for removing an inconvenient and embarrassing or possibly too ambitious Ministerial colleague from the political scene. The right of nomination to the Agency-General was exercised by the Premier of the relevant Colony. There was a grain of truth in the observation of H. L. Hall, who, writing in 1934, commented: "One can be sorry for these men. Appointed by the Colonial Governments either as a reward for political services, or to get them out of the way, they were often in an unhappy position."[25]

VICTORIA'S FIRST AGENT-GENERAL

Victoria's first Agent-General was the Hon. George Frederick Verdon, C.B. He was not appointed, however, until 5 May 1868, the appointment taking effect from 1 December of that year. He was appointed under *The Immigration Act of 1863* which was passed by the Victorian Parliament with the object of inducing a greater number of persons in the United Kingdom and in Ireland to emigrate to Victoria. The Act provided, among other things, for the appointment of an Agent-General for Victoria in the United Kingdom. In 1872, special legislation, *The Agent-General's Act of 1872,* dealing with the office of Agent-General was passed. Hitherto a person who had been a member of Parliament must have ceased to be a member for a period of six months before he could be eligible for appointment to the office of Agent-General. This restriction was removed by the 1872 Act which also limited the period of appointment to not more than three years and increased the salary of the Agent-General from £1,500 to £2,000 per annum, which amount was specifically

25. H. L. Hall, *Australia and England; A Study in Imperial Relations,* Lond. 1934.

appropriated for the purpose. Under *The Agent-General's Act of 1884* the salary was further increased to £2,500 per annum.

Verdon (1834-1896) had emigrated to Melbourne at the age of 17. He had been elected a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly for Williamstown in 1859. In November 1860 he joined the Heales Ministry as Treasurer. He resigned with the Ministry in November 1861, but in June 1863 he became Treasurer in the McCulloch Ministry which continued in office until May 1868. While Parliament was in recess in 1866 Verdon was sent to England to bring the question of the defences of Victoria before the British authorities. He succeeded in obtaining £100,000 towards the cost of a warship, the *Cerberus,* and the *Nelson* was given to Victoria as a training ship. Verdon also floated a loan for public works and obtained sanction for the establishment of a branch of the Royal Mint at Melbourne. Upon his return to Melbourne he suggested the wisdom of the Colony having a representative in London. As a result, in 1868 the office of Agent-General was created, and on 1 December of that year Verdon was appointed to the position for three years. He was very successful in London. In 1866 he had been made a Companion of the Bath, and in 1872 he was created K.C.M.G.

CAREER OF HUGH CHILDERS

But as noted earlier, in the strict sense of the term, Verdon was not the first representative of Victoria in London. That distinction belonged to Hugh Culling Eardley Childers (1827-1896), a remarkable and brilliantly versatile man whose name has an honoured place in Victorian history and who also figures notably in British political history. Childers was, among other things, the founder of the University of Melbourne, and was also one of the five members of the original Board of Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library. The details of his extraordinarily varied and interesting career would require too much space to recount in this paper. Childers had arrived in Melbourne in 1850 with a letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Grey, a distant relative. He became Inspector of Schools, and in 1852 he was appointed Auditor-General of the Colony at a salary of £1,200 a year, although he was then only 25 and had no training in finance. The Auditor-General was then Finance Minister of the Colony and he had a nominated seat in the Legislative Council. In his first speech Childers announced that he proposed to allocate £10,000 for the foundation of a university. On 22 January 1853 the Bill for its establishment

The Right Honourable H. C. E. CHILDERS

was given Royal Assent and the original draft of the Bill in Childers' own handwriting is now in the possession of the University of Melbourne.

In 1885, after responsible government had been granted to Victoria, he became Commissioner of Trade and Customs in the first Victorian Ministry (W. C. Haines, Premier). In September 1856 he was elected for Portland in the Legislative Assembly and a year later he was appointed "Agent for Victoria" in London, he and his family sailing for England on 14 March 1857. But the position was not confirmed, and on 12 March 1858 he returned to Melbourne as representative of a firm of bankers, Baring and Company, in connection with a proposed Government loan of £7 million, which, however, fell through. In July 1858 Childers left Australia for England, and in January 1860 he was elected member for Pontefract in the House of Commons. He maintained close contact with Australian affairs, corresponded with the Anti-Transportation League, and used his influence in the successful campaign against further transportation of convicts to Western Australia.

A GOOD FRIEND TO VICTORIA

For several years there is no doubt that he acted in a purely unofficial capacity as the representative for Victoria in

London. In this connection, I am advised by the Chief Librarian of the State Library of Victoria (Mr. J. A. Feely) that Childers wrote under date 26 April 1864 to Sir Redmond Barry (President of Trustees, Melbourne Public Library) stating:

"I am in office as Civil Lord of the Admiralty and I shall have plenty of hard work. I have given up my Railway, etc., Agency for the Colony."

Mr. Feely comments:

"This earlier office (of Childers) has proved difficult to define. The records of the Chief Secretary 1858-1863 were consulted, and it appeared from them that the responsible official was the Colonial Agent-General—an English civil servant. Thus, in 1863 this official forwarded several communications to the Chief Secretary dealing with the business transactions of the Victorian Government with English firms.

"At the same time, however, there were letters from Childers, but these bore no Colonial Agency letterhead, nor did Childers indicate any official position after his signature. The Chief Secretary's Register described him as 'Mr. Childers, M.P.' The circumstance that makes the position of Childers difficult to define is the personal relationship that he had with many Government officials in Victoria. They seemed prone to seek his assistance in transactions of various kinds that they had with London, and Childers, in a friendly spirit, always seemed ready and able to help."

MEMBER OF BRITISH CABINET

Childers in 1864 had entered Lord Palmerston's Government as a junior Lord of the Admiralty, and it is evident from the letter quoted above that he had given up, because of pressure of official duties, any activities on behalf of Victoria. In 1868 he became First Lord of the Admiralty. In 1870 *H.M.S. Captain,* one of the first two turret battleships in the British Navy, fully rigged and with a large spread of canvas, capsized and foundered whilst under sail in the Bay of Biscay, with a great loss of life. Childers' son was one of the victims. This personal tragedy, the worries connected with the inquiry into the disaster, and the long official hours he worked led to a breakdown in health and his retirement from office. In 1872-73 he was back in the British Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster but resigned to enter business. In 1880 Gladstone returned to power and Childers was appointed Secretary of State for War. In that office he played a leading part in organising the British Expeditionary Force which stormed the lines at Tel-el-Kebir and crushed Arabi Pasha's rebellion against Turkey. Later, Childers was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer and held that position until the defeat of the Government in June 1885. At the next election he was defeated for Pontefract but was returned for

Edinburgh and became Home Secretary. On the defeat of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in June 1886 Childers resigned from office, but retained his seat in the House of Commons until his death (29 January 1896).[26] Upon Verdon's resignation in 1871 to take up the post of Colonial Inspector and general manager of the English, Scottish, and Australian Chartered Bank in Melbourne, Childers had sought and obtained the post of Victorian Agent-General, his appointment dating from 28 December 1871. He, however, held the position for less than a year, and it is evident that his return to British Ministerial office in August 1872 prompted his decision to resign. The appointment of the Hon. Sir James McCulloch in succession to Childers was made on 7 October 1872.

GAVAN DUFFY'S REMINISCENCES

References to Verdon and Childers are made by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, the celebrated Irish patriot and Australian statesman who became Premier of Victoria, in his reminiscences.[27] Duffy, who became Premier and Chief Secretary of Victoria in June 1871, and remained in office for twelve months, says that Verdon performed the functions of Agent-General to his entire satisfaction, but the office was tenable only for three years, except in the case of formal reappointment, and the salary was inadequate. "I was well disposed to set these wrongs right, but there were always a number of critics in Parliament not unwilling to hold the office themselves, and it was an impossible task." After referring to Verdon's retirement to take up an important and remunerative banking post, Duffy continued:

> "I had applicants enough for the vacant office to man a frigate. The Speaker informed my colleague, Mr. O'Grady, that Mr. Francis, Leader of the Opposition, was extremely anxious that the office should be conferred on Sir James McCulloch,[28] who had gone to England, and if this were done he would be willing that I should succeed Sir James when I ceased to be Chief Secretary. *But I was determined that my distribution of patronage should have no element of self-interest in it.*"

Duffy was relieved from his difficulty by a letter from Childers (dated Berlin, 2 November 1871) announcing his willingness to undertake the office. "He was," says Duffy, "eminently fit and altogether unobjectionable, having in fact been sent home by the party I had displaced to undertake an office of the same character."

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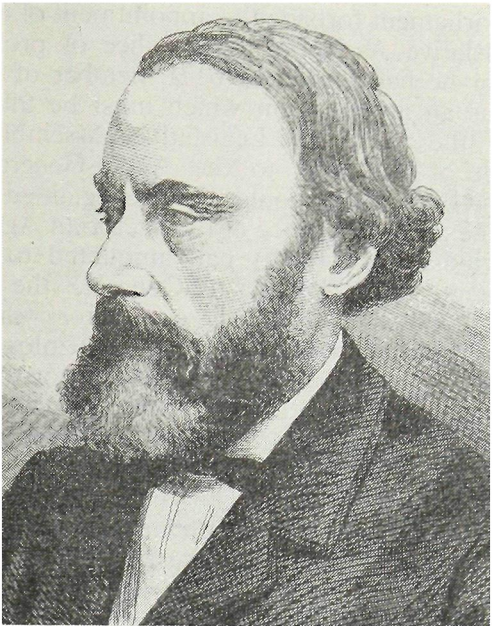
26. *Life and Correspondence of H. C. E. Childers,* by his son, Lieut.-Colonel Spencer Childers; *Political History of England 1837-1901,* Sydney Low and L. C. Sanders.

27. Gavan Duffy, *My Life In Two Hemispheres,* London 1898, p. 335 *et seq.*

28. McCulloch did in fact become Agent-General for Victoria on 7 Oct. 1872. He returned to Victoria in 1875.



SIR CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY

STORM OVER CASHEL HOEY

Duffy's shortlived government was under attack by the Opposition, charged with abuse of patronage, and there was a strong sectarian bias in the Parliamentary eloquence of the day. A storm which finally blew the Duffy Government out of office arose over various issues, mainly the appointment of John Cashel Hoey as Secretary to the Agent-General. When Childers was appointed Agent-General, both he and Verdon informed Duffy that he (Childers) must have a secretary, as political engagements occupied much of his time. Under the Act which authorised the appointment of secretary, the office was in the gift of the Agent-General and his Board of Advice. Hoey was described by Duffy as "a young, vigorously capable man eminently fit for the office of Secretary," and as Duffy had recommended him to Sir James McCulloch for his position on the Board,[29] there was in his view no reason why he should not recommend him to Childers. He did so, and the result was Childers appointed Hoey as Secretary. Duffy comments that there were many men in the Victorian Legislative Assembly who would gladly have gone to London in such an employment, but an Act of the

29. Duffy says Hoey had been selected to represent the Irish Catholiics on the Board.

Victorian Parliament forbade the appointment of any member of the Legislative Assembly to an office of profit until six months after he had ceased to be a member of Parliament, and this was an appointment which must be filled at once. Duffy told the Victorian Legislative Assembly that the appointment of Secretary to the Agent-General was one without which Childers could not be retained as Agent-General. The correspondence of the Victorian Agent-General in the previous year (1870) had amounted to more than 11,000 letters. The Postmaster-General, the permanent officers of the Colonial Office, the contractors who furnished firearms, railway plant, and the like to the Colony had to be interviewed from time to time, and this was not a work which an Imperial Cabinet Minister could be expected to undertake. Duffy pointed out, further, that the appointment would not cost the Colony a penny as the selection of Childers saved the payment of a pension larger than the salary of a secretary. "But," observed Duffy, "gentlemen who wanted office and gentlemen who wanted to save their squatting interests were not open to reason."[30]

Hoey had been formerly editor of *The Nation* (the celebrated journal of the Irish Nationalists, which Duffy had founded and edited) after Duffy's departure for Australia. Subsequently Hoey had become a member of the English Bar and resided in London. Articles published in *The Nation* years before Hoey became editor were attributed to him. Duffy described Hoey as his "best helper" on *The Nation*—"a man who had gifts amounting to genius, and a safer judgment than any of his colleagues" among the young Irish Nationalists, the *tirailleurs* of Irish Nationality.

The Legislative Assembly attacked the appointment of Hoey and declared that he "must be peremptorily removed from office." The vote against the Government was carried, and after a time Hoey was removed from the Secretaryship.[31] The fall of the Government was brought about by the small majority of five votes.

A GREAT IRISH-AUSTRALIAN

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (1816-1903)—he was knighted in 1873 and created K.C.M.G. in 1877—was a great Irish-Australian, and a man of great moral and intellectual honesty. He has a high place in Australian history because of his work for Federation and his efforts to open up large tracts of land

30. *My Life In Two Hemispheres,* Vol. II, p. 339.

31. For the record, Hoey became Secretary to the New Zealand Agency-General in 1874, and remained in that post until 1879, when he was, for the second time, appointed Secretary to the Victorian Agency-General.

for the small selector. In November 1861, when O'Shanassy formed his third ministry, Duffy had the portfolio of Lands, although he had resigned from O'Shanassy's second ministry after a split with his Ministerial colleagues on the question of alienating large tracts of agricultural land. Duffy succeeded in having passed a new Land Act, the chief feature of which was an attempt to provide settlers with good land at a low price. He published in 1862 a *Guide To The Land Law of Victoria,* which went into four editions within a year. At the beginning of 1865 Duffy visited Europe and was absent from Australia for two years. After his return he was elected member for Dalhousie in the Victorian Parliament. On many occasions he had raised the subject of Federation, and he vigorously reintroduced the issue in 1870. A Royal Commission was appointed to go into the question and a first report was produced, but the matter again lapsed. In June 1871 Duffy became Premier and Chief Secretary and remained in office for twelve months. He revisited England in 1874 and declined a seat in the House of Commons. Back in 1852 Duffy had been elected a member of the House of Commons, but Irish members could not agree among themselves and a disheartened Duffy retired from Parliament and emigrated to Australia.

Duffy returned to Melbourne in 1876, was elected member for North Gippsland, and in 1877 was unanimously elected Speaker. He retired in February 1880 on a pension of £1,000 a year and afterwards lived at Nice, on the Riviera. He published in 1880 *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History,* the second volume of which, under the title of *Four Years of Irish History,* appeared in 1883. Other works included *Thomas Davis: The Memoirs of an Irish Patriot* (1890), *Conversations With Carlyle* (1892), and *My Life In Two Hemispheres* (1898). Duffy died at Nice on 9 February 1903. His sons had notable careers in Australian public life. His second son, Sir Frank Gavan Duffy (1852-1936), rose to become Chief Justice of Australia; his eldest son, John Gavan Duffy (1844-1917), was a Victorian politician who held the portfolios of Postmaster-General and Attorney-General in a number of Victorian Ministries. His third son, Charles Gavan Duffy (1855-1932), rose to be Clerk of the Federal Senate and was created C.M.G. in 1934.

IRISH EXILES IN EUROPE

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy was a man of gifted eloquence and penetrating wit. One notable discourse he gave on Irish Exiles at the Athenaeum Hall in 1876 was widely reported in the Australian and British Press. In the course of this lec-

ture,[32] Sir Charles commented that he had met Irishmen, or men of Irish descent, everywhere and in every rank on the Continent. It was a signal illustration of the ultimate futility of sectarian quarrels and religious persecution that some of the most prosperous and honoured families in Ireland were the descendants of the French Huguenots whom Louis XIV drove out of France because they would not become Catholics, and some of the most prosperous and honoured families in France were descendants of Irish Catholics whom the penal laws drove out of Ireland because they would not become Protestants. In the drawing room of the President of the French Republic, Marshal Macmahon,[33] who was the natural head of the exiled families, Duffy met descendants of Irish chieftains who took refuge on the Continent at the time of the plantations of Ulster by the first Stuart; descendants of Irish soldiers who sailed from Limerick with Sarsfield, or a little later, with "The Wild Geese"; of Irish soldiers who shared the fortunes of Charles Edward Stuart; of Irish peers and gentlemen to whom life in Ireland without a career became intolerable in the dark era between the fall of Limerick and the rise of Henry Grattan; and kinsmen of soldiers of a later date who began life as United Irishmen and ended as staff officers of Napoleon. Who could measure, he asked, what was lost to Ireland — and to the British Empire—by driving these men and their descendants into the arms and diplomacy of France? All of them, except the men of '98, had become so French that they scarcely spoke any other language! There was a St. Patrick's Day dinner in Paris every Seventeenth of March, where the company consisted chiefly of military and civil officers of Irish descent, who duly drowned their shamrock and commemorated the national apostle, but where the language of the speeches was French because no other would be generally understood! Duffy reproached a gallant young soldier of this class whom he met in Paris with having relinquished the link of a common language with the native soil of his race. "Monsieur," he replied proudly, "when my ancestors left Ireland they would have scorned to accept the language any more than the laws of England; they spoke the native Gaelic." "Which doubtless," Duffy rejoined, "you have carefully kept up. *Go tha mor thatha?*" But, confessed Duffy with regret, he knew as little Gaelic as English! During Duffy's last visit to Brussels, he saw in the atelier of an eminent painter, the wife of a still more eminent sculptor, a portrait occupying the place of

32. *Town and Country Journal*, Sydney, 27 May 1876.

33. Marie Edme Patrice Maurice de Macmahon, Duke of Magenta, Marshal of France, was descended from an Irish Jacobite family.

honour which exhibited the unmistakable features of an Irish farmer; and the lady pointed it out with pride as her father, who had been a United Irishman and had to flee from Ireland in '98 when his cause lay in the dust.

EDWARD WILLIAM TERRICK HAMILTON

The first of the New South Wales Colonial Representatives was Edward William Terrick Hamilton (1809-1898), who was appointed Representative Agent of the Colony in 1863. Previously a Colonial Agent had represented the Crown Colonies. Parkes and Dalley had spent eighteen months abroad as Commissioners for Emigration and the major task of Hamilton was to handle emigration. Hamilton, son of an English clergyman, had been educated at Eton and Cambridge where he graduated B.A. in 1832 and M.A. in 1835. He was called to the Bar but left shortly afterwards for Sydney where he arrived in February 1840. He held a seat in the Legislative Council from 1843 to 1849, and in 1851 became first Provost of the University of Sydney, an office that he held until 1854. (The title "Provost" was altered to "Chancellor" in 1861.) Hamilton returned to England in 1855, and in 1857 was appointed Chairman of the Australian Agricultural Company, a position he occupied until his death 41 years later. Hamilton, who was an associate of Sir Charles Nicholson, held the office of Representative Agent of New South Wales until 1864. At the end of a year Hamilton resigned the office to stand for election to the House of Commons. From 1865 to 1869 he represented Salisbury in the House of Commons. He had written to the New South Wales Colonial Secretary in April 1864 informing him of his decision to contest the Salisbury seat. He explained that "as the Representative Agent of the Colony, I could do but little without the influence which a seat in Parliament alone can give." In short, Hamilton wanted to enter the British Parliament while still retaining the office of Representative Agent for the Colony. The New South Wales Government refused to be impressed with Hamilton's arguments. It took the view that the two offices were in principle incompatible; that however desirable or beneficial to certain interests it might appear in special cases that the Representative of any Colony should be able to make himself heard, and his personal or political influence felt in the House of Commons, this incompatibility could not fail sometime or other to make itself felt; that on general grounds the conjunction would not only be undesirable, but might possibly prove injurious. It was thought that the interests of a great Colony ought to stand before an Imperial Parliament and British public upon their

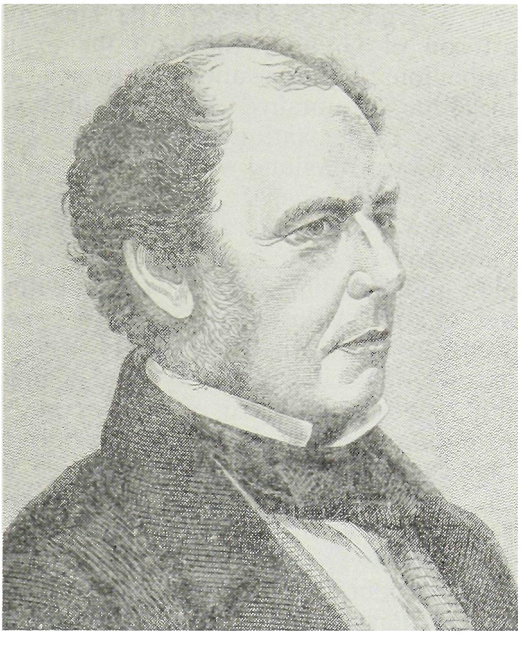
own merits, and not be subject to either exaggeration or depreciation from adventitious aid, or from being merged in personal or local political interests and influences. The view was also expressed in Parliament and in the Sydney Press, that before a tribunal like the House of Commons whose decisions were frequently the result of a balance of conflicting interests, the interests of a remote Colony would be liable to suffer by the imputed weakness of paid advocacy, as compared with independent representation. The very highest personal or political ability in the House of Commons was of little avail unless in association with a party. For an isolated Colonial representative such an association must often be a two-edged sword, full of danger to any cause which, as Representative of a Colony, he would be bound specially to have in charge. Because New South Wales declined to allow Hamilton to continue as its Agent while at the same time occupying a seat in the House of Commons, Hamilton resigned his post as New South Wales Agent.

The attitude of the New South Wales Government was in marked contrast to that of Victoria in appointing Childers who for at least portion of the relevant period when he was representing Victoria in London was not only a member of the House of Commons, but also a Minister of the Crown as well. The general opinion of the other Australian Colonies was that a colonist who was in close touch with the needs of the Colony was to be preferred for the position, and the incumbent should not be too involved with English politicians and financiers because his first loyalty was to the Colonial Government which paid his salary. Certainly Victoria lost nothing on this score by appointing Childers; he was not only deeply interested in Victorian affairs, of which he had a thorough grasp, but he also was well established in London with wide political, financial, and social connections.

On 10 November 1864 Hamilton was succeeded by William Colburn Mayne, who was given the title of Colonial Agent. In December 1870 Charles Cowper, Premier of New South Wales, in his fifth term of office (January-December 1870) deserted politics—his Ministry was on the point of collapsing—and became Agent-General—the first use of this title in New South Wales. A minute written in 1879 by Parkes for the Executive Council[34] explains the significance of the change in title:

> "The office of Agent for the Colony in England was formerly a mere commercial agency, the duties of which were confined to purchasing and shipping material required for the purposes of the Government, and carrying out occasional instructions in matters

34. Minute dated 7 October 1879, *N.S.W. Parliamentary Papers.*



HON. CHARLES COWPER, C.M.G.

of special interest, but about ten years ago the sphere of duties was much extended, and a new class of business understood to be of a semi-diplomatic nature, though never expressly defined, was by general consent assigned to the office, and the more comprehensive name of 'Agent-General' was given to it, with a larger salary and an increased official expenditure. From the date of that important change down to the present time, the Agent-General has necessarily, and very properly, been allowed to exercise a wide discretion. The highest interests of the Colony frequently depend in a large measure upon his tact, discernment, and conciliatory spirit in dealing with circumstances which cannot be foreseen by the Government in Sydney."

It may be appropriate to quote here Henry Parkes's description of Cowper, given many years later:

"He had a familiar acquaintance with the affairs of the Colony, quick insight in dealing with surrounding circumstances, and much good humour and tact in dealing with individuals. His political adroitness was such that it secured for him the popular sobriquet of 'Slippery Charlie'."

WILLIAM FORSTER FALLS FOUL OF PARKES

Cowper was succeeded by William Forster (1818-1882), a remarkable Australian. One of the most outstanding of the Australian Agents-General, he was appointed Agent-General for New South Wales in London in 1876. Forster holds our particular interest because of his early Queensland associa-

tions. He was a nephew of Gregory Blaxland, the seventh and youngest son of Gregory Blaxland the explorer, who with his companions Lawson and Wentworth, blazed the trail over the Blue Mountains. Blaxland and his nephew Forster took up a cattle station at Tirroan in the Burnett district in 1847, where Blaxland was killed by the aborigines. Forster in 1851 sold Tirroan to two brothers, Alfred and Arthur Brown, of Western Australia, who changed the name of the property to Gin Gin, and also took up two other stations, Kolan and Barolin. Forster won scientific fame as the discoverer of that evolutionary curiosity *Ceratodus,* the lung fish, found in the Burnett and Mary Rivers. Forster was a strong and unusual personality, and a man of great capacity, with a long experience of politics in New South Wales. The son of an English doctor, he was born at Madras, India, and had been taken to Sydney when he was eleven years old. Later he became a squatter. As a young man Forster was a notable contributor to the Sydney Press and had a capacity for clever satire. With the establishment of responsible government in New South Wales, Forster was elected to the first Parliament as member for the counties of Murray and St. Vincent. He soon made his mark as a powerful debater and pungent critic, with a capacity for biting invective. Although conservative in politics he opposed a nominee Legislative Council and advocated railway construction on a large scale. In 1859 he was elected for the seat of Queanbeyan, and when the Cowper Government was defeated in that year he formed a short-lived ministry lasting little more than four months. In 1863 — he then represented North Sydney—he was again invited to form a ministry. He failed to do so but became Colonial Secretary in the Martin Ministry (until February 1865). He became Secretary for Lands in Sir John Robertson's first ministry (October 1868), but he retained that portfolio for only three months after Cowper became Premier in January 1870. In 1875, when Parkes's ministry was defeated following the pardoning of the bushranger Frank Gardiner, Forster, who had figured prominently in bringing down the Government, became Colonial Treasurer in Robertson's third ministry and a year later he was appointed Agent-General for New South Wales in London, succeeding Sir Charles Cowper. He remained for five years in England but was recalled by the third Parkes Government as the result of a conflict of views which engendered considerable friction about the nature of his duties and his discharge of them. He returned to New South Wales, was elected for Gundagai in November 1880, and was offered and declined the position of Leader of the Opposition.

REASONS FOR FORSTER'S RECALL

David Macmillan[35] traverses the reasons for Forster's recall. He comments:

> "Forster's Agent-Generalship was to prove a significant and illuminating episode in the political history of New South Wales, and was to lead to an attempt on Forster's part to build up his office to something in the nature of a High Commissionership, independent of the control of the Colonial Government in New South Wales, or at least of the party which by its majority in the Parliament held office."

Forster held strongly adverse views on the device of public works financed by loan moneys for political votes. He fell foul of Parkes and the New South Wales Government on this question, and, as Macmillan shows in considerable detail, it was the ultimate cause of his dismissal from office. Other factors were also involved in creating a background of bitter hostility between Parkes and Forster. Forster was disgusted by the cynical example of political opportunism revealed by the coalition formed in December 1878 by Sir Henry Parkes and Sir John Robertson, who had been inveterate political enemies for more than twenty years. Parkes's friends and informers in London were sending back to Parkes unfavourable reports on Forster, to the effect that he was not "boosting" the Colony sufficiently in regard to emigration. The fact of the matter was that Forster refused to paint exaggerated and glowing pictures of the opportunities in New South Wales for migrants, and was consistently factual and realistic about the difficulties the newcomer would encounter. As New South Wales was then competing with Victoria and Canada for emigrants, Forster's attitude displeased the Parkes Ministry. Parkes was also resentful of Forster's conservative political philosophy, as uncompromisingly expressed in his book *Political Presentments,* which was published in London late in 1878. In this book Forster condemned "the power of the majority to annihilate discussion"; blamed "the onset of democracy" as the cause of "the poor state of Colonial politics," and asserted that in democracies " parties cease to represent ideas or principles. Great statesmen and politicians disappear from the stage. . . Public life no longer offers the same inducement for the highest class of intellect or enterprise."

Forster was also an opponent of Federation and had attacked arguments in its favour, including those put forward by Parkes.

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35. *The Australians In London, R.A.H.S. Journal, Vol. 44, Part 3, pp. 169-180.*

PARKES'S LETTER TO FORSTER

In January 1877, Forster, in his official capacity, read before the Colonial Institute in London a paper entitled "Fallacies of Federation," which was published in full in *The Colonies* newspaper on 27 February 1877. This aroused the ire of the Parkes Ministry, was debated in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, and caused great political excitement in the Colony. A letter addressed by Parkes to Forster, laid on the table of the House, stated:

"New South Wales, Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney,
May 2, 1877.

The Agent-General.

Sir,—The attention of the Government has been called to a paper entitled the 'Fallacies of Federation,' published in *The Colonies* newspaper of January 27, under your name as 'Agent-General of New South Wales,' and said to have been read by you in that capacity before the Colonial Institute, and also to letters bearing your name in previous issues of the same paper, in which you indulge in very free criticisms on the state of political parties in New South Wales.

"2. The question is altogether waived for the present as to the propriety of an officer of the Government clothed with the representative character of the Agent-General indulging before the English public in general political utterances which may be entirely opposed to the views of his Government. But in the paper first noted you have gone far beyond this. You have indulged in a critical examination of the views expressed by Her Majesty's representative in this Colony in which language is employed which can scarcely be regarded as becoming and respectful in one who derives the position he has used for this purpose from the Governor-in-Council.

"In another part of this paper you have taken the liberty to express your adverse opinions on the policy of the Imperial Government, a matter with which the Agent-General of New South Wales was not clearly appointed to concern himself. Occasion might arise when it would be the duty of the Agent-General in some special case to vindicate the claims or defend the interest of this Colony with the Imperial authorities; but his influence for effective service in any such possible conjuncture would be likely to be weakened by his gratuitous strictures of general questions of Imperial policy.

"3. No officer of the Government in the Colony, however high his rank, would be allowed to indulge in public criticisms on the conduct of the Crown, on the policy of the Government, and on the proceedings of political parties in Parliament; and the position of Agent-General, by reason of its representative character, and its removal from immediate control, is one of greater delicacy and responsibility in these respects.

"4. I regret that it is my duty to make this communication. The Government readily admits the zeal and ability with which you have performed the duties of your office; but you must be good enough to regard the views herein expressed on the impropriety of the Agent-General's indulging in public utterances like those to which attention has been called as having the force of instructions for the future. I have, etc., HENRY PARKES."

MOTION OF CENSURE

The Opposition in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly led by Sir John Robertson attacked the tone and spirit of Parkes's letter to Forster, on a motion censuring the Agent-General and restricting the expression of opinions by him on matters of Government policy. Parkes threatened that if the Opposition motion was carried he would not hold office for one hour. Parkes's motion of censure was carried by a majority of two. Fifty-eight members, including pairs, took part in the division. Some of those who voted against the motion of the Leader of the Opposition believed that the Colonial Secretary was not justified in the restriction which he sought to place on the freedom of speech to be exercised by the Agent-General, but they were not willing to see the Government defeated on such a question; they recorded their votes in defence of the letter which they disapproved.

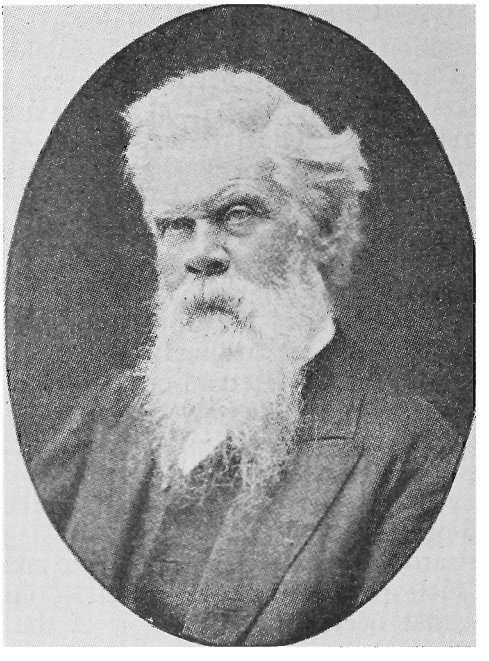
The Sydney *Evening News* commented: "If the spirit of the decision is to be carried out, no members of the Civil Service will henceforward be allowed to give public expression to their opinions on such questions as Free Trade, Colonial Federation, or any that occupy the attention of the Colonial or Imperial Parliament."

FORSTER'S CABLE

In June 1879, the New South Wales Legislative Assembly authorised the raising of a loan of £7 million, although a loan of nearly £5 million had been floated in the preceding month. Forster cabled Parkes on 4 September 1879 that the new authorisation had caused a panic on the market, and stating that Larnoch, the London manager of the Bank of New South Wales, had recommended that Parkes should authorise Forster to announce that no more loans would be floated for two or three years. Parkes resented this as a rebuke, and accused Forster of communicating with the Press on the subject. The source of a Press announcement to the effect that London bankers were opposed to floating the new loan was, in fact, Larnoch, who also communicated with Parkes on the subject.

Forster, in reply to Parkes's rebuke, cabled him on September 17, as follows:

> " . You inform me *Evening News* of 8th has London telegram to effect of mine, mentioning my intention to communicate with my Government, and you express yourself surprised my intention made public. Better ask *Evening News* their authority. I did not make my intention public, or authorise its publication in any form. I did not communicate my intention by telegram or otherwise to *Evening News*. I did not authorise, nor was I aware of, any such communication being made. I did not make known my intention to anybody. Larnach told bank broker he would ask me to apply



SIR HENRY PARKES
(at age of 57).
A photograph taken in 1872, the year of the formation of the first Parkes' Ministry.

for authority to announce publicly that the loans just authorised would not be floated for some time. Larnach thinks the publication of my intention would quiet the public mind, as great indignation exists on Stock Exchange at £7,000,000 being authorised in July before second instalment of last loan was paid up. I have no power to prevent Larnach's communications to anybody, nor are they accountable to Government for making them."

In this connection, the case of the Hon. John Greeley Jenkins, Agent-General for South Australia, offers a parallel. Jenkins, who in May 1901 became Premier, Chief Secretary, and Minister controlling the Northern Territory, resigned on 1 March 1905 to become Agent-General for South Australia in London. He resigned in 1908 because the Price Government had attempted, with maladroit tactlessness and deplorable lack of judgment, to negotiate a loan in London behind his back. A financial fiasco followed. Premature disclosure by a Minister of the Crown caused the London firm conducting the negotiations to break them off.

FRICTION INTENSIFIED

The friction between Parkes and Forster became intensified as the result of an instruction Forster received in July 1879 that he should inquire into allegations made in the New South

Wales Parliament in May by Angus Cameron, a radical member,[36] to the effect that the Victorian Agency in London was mismanaging emigration and that artisans were being " 'kidnapped' . to stimulate an influx of cheap labour at a time of unemployment." Forster did not mince his words in writing to Parkes on 17 July, criticising the Government for heeding Cameron's allegations, many of which he described as palpably false. He further expressed regret that so much importance should have been attached to "a few loose trivial statements," and that the increasing business of the Agent-General's Office should have been thus swelled by unnecessary correspondence.[37]

The letter enraged Parkes. On 11 September, Parkes wrote to Forster, informing him that "the extraordinary character of his letters had been shown to the Ministers in Colonial Council." He was warned that a repetition of his "undisguised insolence and captious criticism" would lead to recall. On 3 October, a Cabinet minute recorded that "the Cabinet decided unanimously that the business of the Government cannot be longer carried on with Mr. Forster as he will not communicate with the Government in civil language." Macmillan notes that Lord Loftus, Governor of New South Wales, disagreed with this decision. He considered that Forster should be reprimanded but not recalled.

The *Sydney Evening News,* which was strongly pro-Forster and anti-Parkes, reported in October that the circumstances which led to the recall of the Hon. William Forster by the Parkes-Robertson Government were "gradually leaking out" . Recalling that confidential advice on the New South Wales loan had been obtained by "our energetic correspondent in London," and numerous cable messages had passed between the Colonial Treasurer and Mr. Forster. "Mr. Forster, indignant at certain accusations made against him, resolved not to wait for the regular mail, immediately sent a cable message to the New South Wales Government, in explanation, which is reported to have cost upwards of £200. This was followed by another, which is reported to have cost £100. Altogether several hundred pounds were spent in cable messages.

"A Cabinet meeting was held at which Mr. Watson, whose soul does not rise much above finance, called attention to this extraordinary expenditure, which would puzzle even Mr. Eager to find out how to pay the votes of Parliament. Sir Henry Parkes is reported to have said that a more serious matter was involved. The money spent on the cable messages could be attributed only to indiscretion, and could not be held to be a subject for more than a reprimand. But the contents of those cable messages were such as no Ministry could tolerate. Either the Government must go out or Forster must be dismissed.

"No decision was arrived at then, but a second Cabinet meeting was held, and Mr. Forster's dismissal was formally proposed. It

36. David Macmillan describes Cameron as "a well-known firebrand."

37. *Ibid.*

was earnestly discussed, and it was found that seven members of the Cabinet were in favour of Sir Henry Parkes's proposal and only two friends remained faithful to Mr. Forster. Sir John Robertson is reported to have suggested the word 'recall' being substituted for 'dismissal' and this proposal was adopted."

"The Cabinet decided on 3 October to remove Forster from office, and on the fact being communicated to him he telegraphed as follows to the Colonial Secretary:

"London, October 14: Your telegram, dated October 7, to hand. I am advised to protest, and do respectfully protest against either recall or dismissal without cause shown or opportunity of defence or explanation given in case of fault found, and also advised to demand payment of expenses and compensation for loss incurred.

WILLIAM FORSTER."

The Colonial Secretary replied as follows:

"Sydney, October 16: You are not authorised to expend public money on telegrams of the character of your message of the 14th instant.

HENRY PARKES."

The *Evening News,* in publishing these messages, denied Sir Henry Parkes's insinuation that the Agent-General gave the information relative to the loan to the special correspondent in London of the *Evening News.* "We are in a position to corroborate Mr. Forster, if corroboration be deemed necessary by those who do not know the high-minded Agent-General."

David Macmillan points out that Parkes, by refusing to allow discretionary powers of action to his Agent-General, and by seeking investigation of very ill-founded allegations, had provoked Forster and secured his dismissal. "It is difficult to assess to what extent personal animosity was responsible, or how far the position was brought about through Parkes's unwillingness to allow the Agent-General that 'extended sphere of duties' and that 'right to exercise a wide discretion' which he himself had stated were conferred when the office was created in 1870. Parkes was, in effect, limiting the powers and lowering the status of the post."

DISMISSED "WITHOUT CAUSE"

Forster protested that he was being dismissed "without cause shown" and expressed the view that Parkes had changed the character of the office by his action. The precedent had been established that the Agent-General could be summarily dismissed at the mere will and pleasure of the Ministry. Subsequently he contended that the authority which he held was derived not from the Colonial Secretary but from the Governor and the Executive Council. His stand was, as will be shown later, identical with the stand taken by Henry Jordan and by John Douglas during their respective terms as Agent-General for Queensland. Douglas went even further than Forster in asserting his claims to independence from the authority of the Colonial Secretary.

Forster's conception of the Agent-Generalship was a non-political office with semi-diplomatic powers, but this was frustrated by Parkes, the effect of whose action was to make the office political. Forster had made a vain attempt in March 1878 to have his authority defined by statute law. He repeated publicly on many occasions his views that the Agent-General's Office should be non-political and above responsibility to the Ministry of the day.

Forster's recall became a live public issue in New South Wales and there was much support and openly expressed sympathy for him in the Press. He was also a vigorous and hard-hitting critic of Parkes and his Ministry.

J. (later Sir John) Henniker Heaton, the celebrated author of the *Australian Dictionary of Dates and Men of the Time,* for 25 years a member of the House of Commons who was recognised as Australia's unofficial member in the House of Commons, was a powerful friend of Forster's, wrote to the *Evening News* in January 1880 expressing his satisfaction that Mr. Forster had "taken leave of office with such a manful determination not to allow private grievances to interfere with his public usefulness."

Heaton enclosed for publication a letter he had received from Forster which stated, inter alia:

> ". . My worst offence, apparently, has been a telegram, ascertained, I suppose, by elaborate computation at the Treasury, to consist of —— words, which are denounced as 'wasteful expenditure.' But I thought the expenditure justified, and even necessary, in order to satisfy the Government, and explain fully the grounds on which I felt compelled to defend myself against the slanderous imputation conveyed by their previous telegram . that I had been guilty of divulging to the *Evening News* official a confidential communication between the Government and myself. I could scarcely have continued to hold office after the receipt of such letters as are above described, but the correspondence had not then reached the culmination to which it was obviously tending, and which was obviously aimed at by the Government throughout.
>
> "MORDECAI SITTING IN THE KING'S GATE"
>
> "But it seems that the Colonial Secretary could not sufficiently restrain his patriotic impatience to get rid of a 'Mordecai sitting in the King's gate,' and to supply himself with an Agent-General more dependent on himself, and towards whom long arrears of mutual obligations on the part of certain members of the Ministry possibly remained to be discharged. So without waiting for my reply, my dismissal was determined on, and before the letters in question reached me, I was informed to that effect by telegram, briefly communicating the decision of the Governor and Executive Council, without assigning reasons.
>
> *"Accordingly, there is no escaping from the fact, and the precedent is thereby established, that the Agent-General has been, and can be, dismissed without cause shown or reason assigned, and consequently without opportunity of defence or explanation.*

"But several pages of what purported to be reasons, after I know not what painful process of thought and elaboration, were about the same time put on record in the shape of a minute of the Executive Council, and have been since communicated to me by letter. In this minute, which is distinguished by a ludicrous solemnity, you will find embodied in very vague though in less objectionable language, the substance of the previous letters and telegrams above referred to.

"A DOLOROUS JEREMIAD"

"But there is some new matter in a dolorous and almost pathetic Jeremiad, flavoured with the peculiar twang of the Colonial Secretary, upon the sad absence of confidential relations and the difficulties standing in the way of secret correspondence with a cross-grained Agent-General, too much given to publicity. This has long been a favourite theme of lamentation with the Colonial Secretary, who appears to have got it into his head that his own personal interest and convenience in having a man Friday at the Antipodes becomes a public interest and convenience the moment he takes office. But in my case he seems quite to have forgotten the facts that I had often written privately to some of his colleagues, and that the difficulty between us was in great measure caused by his own questionable antecedents, in proof of which I need only refer to public documents. How could I correspond safely with a public personage who, to confound an opponent in debate, had publicly divulged the contents of a letter received by him 17 years before in confidence as editor of a paper, or who had carried on, as Colonial Secretary, with a prisoner in a cell awaiting his trial, conversations which, unknown to the prisoner, were being taken down in shorthand by a reporter behind a door, not to mention other eccentricities of the same description. .

" To me this whole question of difference between the Government and myself seems absurd and paltry in the extreme—a question, in short, of the meaning of words and of the force or value of dialectical expressions, upon which I may surely claim to be at least as good an authority as the Colonial Secretary, whose imperfect education and unbounded egotism combine to make him a very unsafe guide upon questions of phraseology. But the criticisms of a Minister who can enforce his literary opinion with minutes of the Government and Executive Council inevitably carry with them an authority denied to ordinary utterances.

" I am well aware that the very suspicion of a personal grievance, or interest, always hangs like a millstone round the neck of any public man. I am, therefore, discouraged by what has occurred from again entering into public life."

"POLITICAL ADVENTURERS"

Forster's extensive "Views on Colonisation" which received wide publicity in the Sydney Press, also referred to " the thousand and one opportunities made available to the utmost by political adventurers, of ministering to personal proft, aggrandizement, and vanity," "the loose financial habits of colonial governments" and "the large and unnecessary debt" of the Colony of New South Wales. "Political deterioration"

he averred "must, in the long run, affect the social condition." "Of what avail was it," he asked, "to inculcate moral precepts when the highest honours and rewards of public life were grasped in the Colonies, and in England afterwards made a passport to Imperial honours, through the patronage and recommendation of Her Majesty's Ministers, by politicians whose careers, both public and private, have consisted in notorious violations of moral principles and obligations."

He maintained that "the indebtedness of all these Colonies" had been progressive since their emancipation from the control of Downing Street—"it was large in proportion to their resources and extravagant in proportion to their populations." Colonial revenues all had been largely drawn from the proceeds and disposal of large tracts of waste or Crown lands to which none of the Colonies had any special right and which by their exhaustion have rendered the collection or creation of revenue from other sources more imperative, and at the same time more difficult, from the very facilities they afforded, and the loose financial habits they had engendered. . " "The mischievous and even corrupt influence of political action upon finance in New South Wales was apparent. . The original purchases, however necessary and beneficial, of both the Sydney and Newcastle railways from private companies were, in a great degree, corrupt transactions, which were effected mainly by political means, involved vast public loss, saddled the Treasury with a large and most unnecessary debt, and tended to the personal profit or advantage of a number of political and commercial speculators."

A determined and eloquent opponent of Colonial Federation and what he described as "the futility of constitution-mongering," Forster claimed that Federation had always proved a poor substitute for nationality and was indeed a sort of confession of the want of nationality. He contended that in an Empire such as the British, the true Federalism was Imperial unity, and the factitious creation of new local groups . . if successful must be centrifugal in its effect, since it increased the centripetal impulse in a contrary direction, and weakened it in the direction of the common centre.

ADVOCATED IMPERIAL FEDERATION

Forster's aspiration which he zealously preached to English audiences, was Imperial Federation—that is to say, of Federation of all the self-governing colonies, and of Great Britain and Ireland in one great Empire and representative system. As component parts of a representative system of government, the colonies were entitled to a voice, proportionate to

the population and importance of each, in the regulation of any expenditure in which they were called upon to share.

This voice, this regulating power, could only be effectively provided for by representation in the Imperial Parliament, or in some equivalent or superior assembly, clothed with supreme authority over Imperial and Federal, or properly national affairs. Such authority, doubtless, was technically and legally vested in the Imperial Parliament, but constitutionally, and *de facto,* this parliamentary authority had in great measure become nominal, by the grant of self-government to certain colonies. The only means of restoring vitality and validity to this nominal authority was by including the colonies among its constituent powers. The colonies had the Home Rule, which Ireland was clamouring to have. What they wanted was that participation in Imperial rule which Ireland had, but on which she seemed to set small value. By conceding self-government, Great Britain had, in fact, admitted the political and federal equality of the Colonies. If the Colonies be integral parts of the Empire, this concession would have to be extended to its logical consequences, by further concession and recognition of, and by making provision for proportionate rights in the federal government of the Empire. "It really seems as if the question were between extension and consolidation of the Empire on the one hand, and disintegration on the other."

One wonders, if Forster were alive today, what he would think of the development of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the evolution that has changed it in effect from an exclusive white nations' club comprising Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa (which has since left the Commonwealth) to a "family" of nations, a heterogeneous congeries of black, brown, and white peoples of widely divergent racial and cultural characteristics. One wonders further what this conservative and ardently Imperialist advocate of a Greater Britain ruled by an Imperial Parliament would think of the changed status of the Crown: the fact that allegiance to the Crown is no longer a necessary concomitant to membership of the Commonwealth; that Republican status is now compatible with inclusion in the Commonwealth, and that the British Commonwealth includes dictatorships such as Ghana and Nyasaland and Communist Zanzibar!

Forster augured a more brilliant and prosperous future for the Australian Colonies as permanent members of a great world-wide, world-ruling federation, as the imperative alternative to fragments of a shattered or dissolving empire, drifting into infinite space. The concept he visualised is far

removed indeed from the concept of an expanding Commonwealth in which the then British Prime Minister (Mr. Macmillan) saw peoples emerging from a dependent status to become equal partners by their own free choice, and which he prophesied might well prove to be one of the greatest developments in the course of human progress.